

WICKED... and Spotless as the Lamb by Lyle Glazier

Chapter One

1913-15, Age 2,3,4

I was sitting in the kitchen in Grampa Brigg's lap being rocked in his rocker. Uncle Forrest was a big boy. He went to the woodshed. I heard him rummaging a barrel. He brought me back an animal cracker.

Uncle Forrest said, "Eat."

I looked at the elephant. I felt it with my fingers. I lifted it to my nose, I lifted it to my cheek. I bit off the elephant's tail. It tasted good. I bit off the elephant's trunk, I bit off the elephant's head. Uncle Forrest gave me the tiger. I ate the tiger.

-O-

We were living in the parsonage down to North Leverett above the damp smell from the River. Invited for supper up the road to Uncle Maurice's, Aunt Pluma brought cup custard from the pantry. "I've got a lemon pie in the paantry but I knew no body would waant aany so I didn't bring aany to the taable."

-O-

Gramma Briggs's brother Miner Glazier was slow in the head. He gobbled jello with the spoon. Gramma asked, "Do you like it?" Miner cocked his head: "All you have to do is gap 'an swaller."

Miner ate some more Jello while Uncle Chester and Aunt Gloria were watching. Miner laid down his spoon. "It's pretty good what there is of it." The folks tittered. "And theys plenty of it such as it is."

-O-

The year Pop and Uncle Maurice were running the North Leverett store, after supper Mel and I went where the men were, up the trapdoor to the attic. Under a lantern hanging from a hook from the ceiling, two men with shirts off were wrastling, arms and chests slippery with sweat. It was hot up there in the attic, smelling of bumping and whanging. I started down the ladder. Pop followed, carried me home.

-O-

At Gramma Glazier's waking from sleep in the little chamber in the middle of the night, I crawled out to the commode. I couldn't find the chamber pot. I got caught under the rockers of the rocking chair and crawled under into the kitchen.

On hands and knees round the kitchen table, Gram and Gramp found me and carried me back to the commode and held me to pee.

-O-

I was a big boy riding in the Stanley Steamer with Uncle Perry slowing down past the unpainted house. I was spelling out the letters to Aunt Maud. It read "An-tee-kews." Back at home when she told Gramp and Gram, they were all laughing. I crinkled inside because they were laughing at me.

-O-

Playing in a sandbox with Melvin, we looked up at a high window where Mom was looking down. She went out of sight, then came back and threw down two fresh doughnuts from the third story one at a time. The bell rang from Montague High School. We ate our doughnuts, Mom looking down.

-O-

(1916, at 5)

In the upper, double-bed bunk of the shanty above Mom and Pop sleeping below, Melvin nudged me, my first day of school. Light was streaming through the one-pane high window above the cot where Clayton was sleeping. We crawled down the ladder and dressed and ran outside where Mom called us to fetch water from the spring down over the hill, dawnlight sprinkling the valley above the Connecticut River winding below beyond the flatland of Northfield Farms Meadow. Carrying lunch pails, we ran crosslots to school, Mel ahead with the big boys.

At ten o'clock recess all the kids bolted out the front door, and down the road across the bridge over Four Mile Brook past Mrs. Gilbert's, our Sunday School teacher. We went into the yard of the Billingses, where Kenneth Lynch came over from his grandmother's with his thin mat of yellow hair. Everybody was patting Kenneth till we heard the clang of the handbell.

Just before the little bridge, the older girls were running, screaming and pointing: "Lyle Glazier is going to get a whaling from Miss Dalton! He whacked Kenneth Lynch on the head!"

I veered across the road and up through scrub brush on the path to the shanties, and was crawling under barbed wire at the top of the hill when my ankles were grabbed from behind. I was up on the shoulders of Stanley

Podlenski, eighth grader: "Miz Dalton isn't going to lick you, Mary Dalton never licked anybody."

After school, back home, Mel told Mom, "Lyle whacked Kenneth Lynch on the head!" "How could you?" "I didn't." "He did, too." "Did you, Lyle?" "I never!" "He did!"

"I'll have to tell Pop and let him settle it when he comes home."

Pop took out his jackknife and gave it to me and told me to cut an apple tree sprout. Pop laced my bare legs. No matter how I howled, it did me no good.

-O-

Winter cold in the shanty, Mel whispered, "Let's we stay home from school," making it seem exciting. Mom dosed us with sulphur and molasses and we had to stay up in the bunk until lunchtime when she let us come down in nightgowns for stove-lid toast and cambric tea. Looking out the west window over the valley, we could see way up above the store where the cemetery road joined the main road. A team of horses was drawing a sled, the horses' bridles bright with red ribbons. As the double-runner sled moved nearer on the long hill above Woods's store, we could see kids jumping off the back of the hay rack, boys pelting girls with snowballs. It had to be the sleigh ride Mr. Tenney had been promising. Mel howled to let us get dressed and go down to the sleigh ride.

Mom said, "I can't let you get out of your sick bed and catch your death of cold. You can watch from the window."

We watched the slow progress of the sleigh ride.

-O-

Carrying our lunch, Mom and Mrs. Carey and Mrs. Black and a lot of us shanty kids went north into the pasture under great old chestnut trees. We played hide and seek and "Gobble gobble in free" in the scrub growth looking down over the Connecticut valley. I hid in the center of a box juniper bush and nobody could find me till I came out when Mom brought out her egg sandwiches. Mrs. Carey said it was a cow pasture, but it was grassy under the trees and no cows in sight. We broke open the prickly burrs of chestnuts, cracked shells, and dug out the meat.

From under the chestnuts we could look down over Northfield Farms to the meadows and big barns east of the river with long cornfields covering the

bottomland except where a hundred red and white cows like toy animals cropped grass in a pasture fringed with tall trees along the river bank.

Upstream above the west bank, on a hillside high above the river, floating like a patch quilt in summer haze, were green lawns and tall grey or red brick buildings and white cottages. I asked Mamma if it was Heaven, and she laughed and said, "It's Mount Hermon."

I asked, "What is Mount Hermon?" and she said, "It's Mount Hermon school for boys."

-O-

After supper most nights loggers and millhands pitched quoits in the worn ground south of the shanties. We school kids were sent to bed early, the sky still bright, Mel and I laying in our upper bunk listening to the men clinking horse-shoes. We could hear the gusty laughter, Pop yelling, "My ringer will slide between the legs of your leaner without touching a hair!"

-O-

One night when one of Carey's houndogs came whimpering with his muzzle bristling with hedgehog quills, the men lighted a lantern and carried him over into the gully of the logroad. They hung the lantern on a wild cherry limb, and rolled an old wagon wheel where they could see what they were doing, the dog fussing and whining like all get out. Ganging up on his thrashing, they pushed his throat down between spokes of the wagon wheel till they could hold him fast against the hub.

Every time the pliers closed on the end of a quill, Mr. Black said, "Easy does it, boy, we aint a goin' to hurt you."

Mr. Carey said, "It hurts like Hell!"

Pop was managing the pliers while the other men held the dog, barbs digging in, pointed back up so you had to pull against them.

"It must hurt him like fury!" Jim Black said.

After awhile the dog stopped struggling, and flopped there rolling his eyes at the hands working him over. Past bedtime, all the schoolage kids except the Careys had to go to bed. We could hear their voices over the slope where they were working. At breakfast Pop said it was midnight before they got out the last barb.

"I can tell you one thing, it was touch and go -- he was a pretty sorry looking customer when we got through with him!"

-O-

One workday afternoon after school, all the womenfolks and kids were over at the edge of the plateau looking down at the cemetery on the back road and beyond to where, across a meadow, the ferry road turned from the main road down to the river. In the middle of the cemetery, a gravedigger was opening a grave; spading done, he went over and opened the south panel of the iron gate north of the barrow where they put bodies in winter to keep them till the ground could be worked in spring. A hearse and a dozen cars came down the side road and turned in the gate to the gravesite. The passengers, men and women, looked like playthings in their black clothes as they silently got out of cars and crowded around the casket being unloaded from the backend of the hearse, the coffin passed along hand to hand until mourners were lined up on both sides. A half dozen or more women in black were there, standing back, quietly waiting.

Suddenly the bearers put down the casket, and all joined to run out the gate and around the barrow towards the mountain.

"Have they gone crazy?" Mrs. Carey said. "Do you have the slightest idea what they are up to?"

They were strung out along the cemetery wall, men ahead, women behind, all waving their arms and shouting, but we could barely make out their voices as they rounded the curve on the southeast side, and swung downhill around the bend in the road towards the little bridge over the gully.

"Heavens to Betsy!" Mrs. Black yelled, "My baby is having his nap!"

She was running back toward her shanty, where smoke was pouring from the tin chimney and we could hear a faint crackle and see a flicker of orange inside the west window. We were all running after her until she met Bertha Black carrying the baby.

"Thank the Lord!" Mrs. Black said, grabbing him and holding him tight.

By the time we collected ourselves, smoke was really erupting and Mrs. Black was handing the baby to her daughter and starting toward the door of the shanty.

"Stay back, there!" The first men were arriving from the cemetery and crowded past to keep Mrs. Black from going inside. They seemed to know just

what ought to be done, grabbing water buckets, emptying rain barrels to throw water on the roof. They got all the women to fetch dippers and pails and pans and organized a bucket brigade, stringing out everybody, man and boy, lady mourner and shanty women and their daughters. From the spring down over the hill, we passed kettles, pots, pans and water buckets hand to hand to where the preacher and the undertaker emptied them onto the fire, the Blacks losing everything, nothing left but the iron stove fallen into the dry-cellar.

-O-

After Sunday meeting bedtime, Mel and I were lying in our bunk listening to Pop and Mom out in the front half of our shanty where the bracket lamp on the wall above the table shed a warm glow. Pop had been reading aloud about the coon and the possum and the old black crow. Now they were talking about the old days when the Glaziers lived in a log cabin on Brushy Mountain where Indians used to come to set up tepees before continuing east across Quabbin Swamp or going back west into New York state. Mom's mother was born Glazier. Her mother Abby Pike was from one of two Pike families who lived on Brushy Mountain. Abby married Lyman Glazier, brother of Edward Glazier who bought the house Grampa and Gramma Glazier now lived in. Abby's cousin Simon Pike was born half Indian, and the two of them grew up together on Brushy Mountain. Simon's mother Mary was a full blooded Indian who stayed on and married Aaron Pike when her tribe moved on from the mountain. Mary Indian lived on with Simon's brother Stephen after Aaron died.

It seemed all mixed up and not very interesting, except the Indian part of it. Seeing we were still awake, not gone to sleep. Pop started singing softly in his high tenor:

I'm in the millpond, I can't swim,
How kin I git out agin?

Then he sang in a deep rumbling voice like a grandfather bullfrog:
I got in an out agin.

Yew'll git out I

Then he switched voices, beginning with the rumbling bass:

I'm in the millpond, I cain't swim,
How cain I git out agin?

And then again in a high, quavering falsetto:

Yew'll git out like yew got in,

I got in an out agin.

We kids were almost asleep now. Mom said, reprovingly, as if there was something bad in it, "Harry!" her voice half laughing.

-O-

On Friday night after work and supper, Pop went down to Frank Howe's in the valley to speak for his horse and buggy Saturday afternoon for him and Mom to drive to Millers Falls to buy Mom a pair of number 4 shoes to fit her small feet. Only a little over four feet tall, she had a miserable time buying clothes the few times she could afford to buy any. Saturday afternoon came, and we had early lunch, and all three boys were given permission to go across lots fishing in Four Mile Brook, we older brothers promising to take good care of Clayt and not tucker him out.

When we came back in late afternoon, the folks hadn't gone anywhere, still turning the shanty bottom-side-up to find the ten dollar bill they laid aside for the trip.

"I can't for the life of me see where it could have gone, " Mom was saying for, probably, the fiftieth time.

They emptied the front shanty of everything but the kitchen stove and the striking clock on the mantel, and went through the waste basket and even emptied the stove's firebox to make sure the bill hadn't fallen in there.

Pop was asking Mom as he had asked twenty times if he had asked once, "Did any neighbors come in to talk to you?"

Mom said, "No, they haven't. I only stepped over to Mrs. Black's to offer to buy that black tea Mrs. Black has been talking about Jim's never remembering to buy for her."

Pop asked, "Did you leave the door open?"

Mom said, Yes, she had, but they never bother to lock up when stepping over to a neighbor's.

Pop asked if she had seen any strangers around, and Mom said No.

They were exasperated, and didn't know who or what to blame. They asked each of us older boys a dozen times if we had seen a ten dollar bill floating around. Of course we hadn't. I tried to imagine I had seen it, but couldn't imagine anywhere likely I could have.

Finally Pop went down off the mountain to talk to Frank Howe about not wanting the mare that day after all, we two older boys going with him. Mrs. Royce, Frank's mother-in-law, offered to lend some money, but Pop refused her.

Back home, Mom said, "I should say not, we had hard enough time saving ahead to put that much aside."

She had got wrought up and complained about shanty life, how hard it was on the women, and how Maud, Pop's sister, would never have agreed to it. Then she got back to where they ended up every once in a while with her wishing she never got married.

"I could just as well have gone back to Flatbush."

Pop got down at the mouth. We kids had to go to bed early and laid in the bunk listening to the squabble. Mom reminded Pop of the time right after they were married, when they were walking on the road and Aunt Maud and Uncle Perry came by in the car, and stopped and Aunt Maud said they were on the way to Greenfield to see the airplane, the first airplane to come anywhere near that close to Moores Corner, and Maud said, "Harry can come with us if he wants to, but there wouldn't be room for Mertie."

Pop grew awful quiet. Mom was still jawing when we boys were dropping off to sleep. Pop was trying to get her mind off and mentioned Block Island, the trip they took on the CV Railroad just after they got married, and Mom said, "Yes, and we'll never take another one!" And she mentioned the "shivaree...and I said I would never sleep in that house again, and I never will."

It was more than Pop could do to hush her.

I woke in the night and came to to hear their voices down below in the bottom bunk. Pitch black in the cabin, they didn't seem to be quarreling. Mom was whispering, "Hush! you'll wake up the boys," her voice a soft murmur.

-O-

Sunday noon all five of us went up Poppa's path a ways towards the top of the mountain and Pop found a spot he knew under some oaks where a trickle came down from the swampland. We boys could wade in a pool and pretend a backup of lodged leaves made a dam, and a shoal of minnows were foot long trout, and we launched some chips for ocean liners and then all of us had jelly sandwiches and doughnuts. After picnic lunch Pop took out his jackknife and

carved all three of us boys swords from slabwood. Melvin broke mine in a sword fight, and Pop didn't carve another. He carried Clayton on his shoulders back down to the shanty, the baby holding tight to his wooden sword. It was a happy day even if Mel broke my sword.

One day the next week Mom raised a corner of the striking clock on the shelf and found the ten dollar bill stuck to the bottom where she put it for safe keeping. She hardly seemed surprised. When she showed it to Pop, she said, "It was never going to come out of hiding. You can't ever change where it is till you find it."

-O-

Mom packed lunch on a warm Saturday in May and she and us boys all set out to climb up through the woods all the way on Poppa's Path to the top of the mountain, Mel and I running ahead, but Clayt lagging until Mom picked him up and carried him over the steepest pitches. As we neared thinned treetops and open sky, we could hear the drag of the saw followed by clickety-clack as it gained speed, a long time before we got where we could see sawdust hanging over the tree tops, and the path wound down into a marshy saddle, where the mill squatted in its clearing. The men had a log on the siding, one of the Careys standing at the top of the ramp with his cap askew above his forehead. His canthook hung loose at his side as if he wasn't about to send another log tumbling down the sluiceway. Uncle Maurice stood spread-legged at the carriage, raising his gloved hand and bringing it down on the clamp to start the last slab on its way to be split by the saw for Pop to grab it and throw both halves on the slab pile, then jam his ruler in his back pocket.

He came over, wiping his face with his red handkerchief. "I see you made it."

He lifted Clayton onto his shoulder, and led the way to a warm level place in the sun where Mom unpacked the lunch box. Everybody was hungry, knowing what there was in the bucket. There was a fried egg sandwich and filled cooky and fresh doughnut for each. Pop and Mom shared his thermos of coffee, and we boys used the little tin cups to drink our milk. By the time Mom and Pop stretched out for a nap, and Mom gave permission to run down into the hollow if we didn't stray out of sight, Uncle Maurice was laying away his tools.

Tomorrow would be Memorial Day. On the way back down the mountain, from a marsh by the brookside Pop cut bunches of sticky-sweet swamp pink and farther on, on a hillside broke off mountain laurel. On a mossy bank he pointed out crisp leaves of Mayflower Trailing Arbutus hugging thin rocky soil, the blossoms shriveled and dirty-pink/dirty-white but sweet-smelling still. He knew where to find all the spring flowers -- windflower, groundnut, star flower, foam, lady slipper, dog-toothed violet, jack-in-the-pulpit; all spring he had brought them to Mom.

At the shanty he had us fetch water in the tin pail to freshen the flowers while he went down to remind Frank Howe he had spoken for the mare for tomorrow. It was an early-to-bed night.

In the morning was the ten-mile trip in the buggy back home to Moores Corner, Mom and Pop and Clayt riding in the front seat behind the horse's tail, and we two older boys dangling our feet over the backboard, watching sand fill in the wheelruts and the hollows left by the horse's hooves.

We left flowers in the cemetery on the hill above Grampa Glazier's and, on the Brushy Mountain Road from Moores Corner, in the older burying ground where Jonathan Glazier and his wife Azubah were laid to rest.

-O-

(Aug. 1917, Age 6)

Grampa brought Mel back from vacation and rode with the logging team up the mountain and was late leaving the mill for home. He had strict orders from Gram to stop at the shanty and pick me up and carry me back with him. By the time we got out to North Leverett, I was asleep in the back seat, and Aunt Maud and Gram carried me into the little chamber and undressed me and bundled me into bed, their voices distant and fuzzy. It was already past bedtime and dark as pitch indoors and out, the only lamplight from the open door to the kitchen which was pulled softly to when Gram and Aunt Maud tiptoed away.

In the middle of the night I came out of my deep sleep to find a big boy pulling up my nightgown and lying on top of me, pushing his peepee back and forth between my legs. He was smothering the life out so I had to squirm around to breathe under his armpit. At first he just laid there with his peepee in between my legs, then he was moving, making himself felt. It began to feel good, all warm and cozy. When he was moving faster, he put his hand over my mouth and

whispered, "Hush!" He was going faster and faster. Then he was still and it was all sticky and beautiful down there in the hollow between my legs. He was breathing hard, his head on my pillow. He was holding tight, cuddling me. After a while, he flopped over and mopped up with his nightdress. He put his mouth close and whispered, "Don't you tell your Gram!"

Hardly daring breathe, I whispered back "When can we do it again?"

He was holding his breath but let it out with a whispery laugh, "Holy Cow! you and me, we are going to have fun!"

When he pulled me towards him, I was squirming away into my own space, asleep again in a second. Sometime later he pulled me back, and this time I helped him. He put both my hands on his peepee and told me to hold him tight, and I did, and could feel it moving inside its sack of skin. It was better than the first time.

I went back to sleep. When I woke it was daylight. Gramma was baking cookies when we went out to breakfast. Arthur was watching me but I didn't say anything. Later in the dark haybarn under the haymow hanging out over the barn floor, he wanted me to let him pee in my mouth, but I didn't want to and pushed away. A little got on my face, and he was laughing at me. I followed him up into the top of the barn and through a tunnel of hay a long way along the ell up over the barnyard until we reached the cobwebbed east window.

There, in a little room in the hay, he said, "Ritchie and I come here afternoons." He opened up his pants and began to play with himself, and I watched him. His voice was thick. He was whispering, "I won't pee in your mouth." He rocked there grunting and mumbling. I would help him if he asked me but he didn't. When I reached toward him, he pushed my hand away. His hand was going faster and faster. His eyes were on my face. Afterward he cleaned himself up with his handkerchief. We just laid there each in his own place. We had been there a long time when we heard Aunt Maud in the dooryard calling us to dinner.

Ritchie was Arthur's friend, older than Arthur. They never paid any attention to me when they were together. After Arthur left with his mother, I walked over the back roads looking for him, knowing I could never find him. I even went by Ritchie's house slow, hoping Ritchie would come out, but he didn't.

After Arthur left, I never saw Ritchie.

One morning Aunt Maud took me up to Bourne's store to exchange eggs and butter for flour, and Jim Eastman was there in the yard, a big boy almost as old as Arthur. We went over into the barn and up in the haymow, and he was wrestling me. I asked if he would like to play fuck, and he said, "You can't play fuck with a boy." I told him, "Yes you can," and was showing him, when we heard Aunt Maud calling from down on the barn floor. We kept quiet up there in the mow, but she kept calling me until I slid down beside her and we walked out the back door into the clover. I found a four-leaf clover for Gramma.

The next morning after breakfast, I was starting up through the orchard when Aunt Maud called me back and asked where I was going.

I told her, "Up to the Corner."

She said, "I don't want you going there unless I do," so I didn't go and never played with Jim again.

Chapter Two

1917, Age 6

Thanksgiving

It was Wednesday afternoon, and school let out at noon. We might as well have no classes. I hardly heard a word Miss Dalton said in Arithmetic and English (my favorite subjects) but History was wonderful. She read about the First Thanksgiving -- Indians with tomahawks and feathers, squaws with babies strapped to their backs, and white settlers with oversize shoe buckles on the front of their tall gray hats, all sitting down together for wild turkey and cranberry sauce and sweet potatoes, and apple and mince and punkin pie. I could hardly wait for school to let out.

For a week Pop has been talking about "going back home." Wednesday afternoon Grampa Glazier stopped at the shanty after the mill shut down to pick up Mel and me and carry us back home for Thanksgiving. We rode in his Overland. Pop and Mom and Clayton would come Thursday morning in Frank Howe's rented buggy, but Mel and I went ahead the night before. Pop and Mom and Clayt would stay up at the Corners with Aunt Ruth and Uncle Henry Towne in Gramma Briggses house, where Mom was born, but we stayed down at the big house where Pop was born and grew up.

Gramma and Aunt Maud were waiting at the side door, having heard the car coming past the sandbank. I was so tired from waiting, they tucked me to bed in the little chamber off the big kitchen, but Mel stayed up to have supper. I laid in bed listening to the hum of voices and water from the spring way up in the pasture at the top of the sandbank, piped down and gurgling into the green hogshead taller than my head, and flowing from there into the sinkdreen and piped again into the horse trough in the back kitchen and out through the wall to the rivulet in the ravine between house on the knoll above the road and henhouse on the south slope of the sandbank, and then on to culvert under main road from where it meandered past two coal kilns through the meadow to Sawmill River. It was going-back-to-sleep music you could hear at midnight if you woke up. And lying there in the dark beside my sleeping brother, I heard the

clack of the outside cathole into the woodshed, and the closer chuck as the tomcat came in from the cold and stopped for a drink at his dish before chucking the cathole that let him slip upstairs into the bedrooms to leap quietly onto Uncle Perry's bed. I wished he had come into our room and snuggled down beside me, but probably he didn't expect us to be there. In a few minutes the timid click as the tabby made her way up to Aunt Maud's room upstairs over the side door. I was almost asleep.

Past daylight outside our south window I came out of my deep sleep. I could hear Gramma's footsteps from pantry to kitchen and back. Mel was still dead as a log. I crawled out into the chill and into my clothes. Aunt Maud helped me through breakfast, and I hurried to the cowbarn, where Gramp was squirting warm milk into the pail. Tabby was purring beside him, and turned her head at Gramp's "Bunny Boy," when I came in to the warm and steamy shed. The other two cows were chewing their cud and tonguing hay out of their mangers. Gramp was sitting with his head against the cow's flank, as he squirted milk with a swishing sound into the half full pail. "You like to come to Gramp's, Bunny Boy?" Tabby turned her head towards his voice, and sat up as he aimed a squirting stream into her mouth. She rolled her eyes as the stream missed and smacked her chin. She lapped furiously with her pink tongue not to miss a drop of it.

Gramp cleared his throat. "When I was a boy, I had a pet woodchuck used to sit by the kitchen range, setting up straight like she is, and if I flipped him a flapjack, he would lean farther back every time I flipped him one, till he would tip over backward and whack his head kerflop on the woodbox."

Gramp cleared his throat again. "Harrumph!" with a laugh, "He was a great old Chuckie!"

Around ten o'clock, Uncle Maurice came and Aunt Pluma and Loyce and Merle and Lynn. Uncle Perry took us children out beyond the wagonshed to crack walnuts. Then it was time to climb up the plank side of the ice house to pry a chunk of ice out of the sawdust and fetch it to the menfolks. Maurice put the chunk into a burlap bag and smashed it into pieces with the axehead.

Uncle Perry put the freezer together. Inside the wooden barrel he rested the flange of the dasher in its groove at the bottom of the canister and gave it a couple of twirls to see if it was steady. Aunt Maud brought the bowl of cream and

sugar and sweet smelling vanilla. She poured it into the canister, and Uncle Perry fastened down the cover. Then he laid the clamp on top and fitted the gears into the notches in the shaft of the dasher coming up through the lid of the canister and fastened the clamp tight on both sides of the barrel. He fitted the handle into its gear shift. The handle went up and down and around like a ferris wheel, and the dasher in the canister went round and round like a merry-go-round. Uncle Maurice poured broken ice out of the burlap and packed it tight around the canister, leaving it loose around the hole for the runoff. Pop poured in a handful of salt, keeping it below the runoff hole so none of it would get inside the canister.

When Merle asked why it takes salt, Pop said to melt the ice and make it freeze faster. On a good day the men were in shirtsleeves. They took turns turning the crank until it went slower and slower. Merle took a turn, and each of us kids took a practice turn till it tightened too tight for us. Somebody wanted to know why it turned so hard, and Uncle Perry said, "Let Harry explain it. He got A in Physics and I got zero plus."

Pop said it takes heat to melt ice, and the heat comes from the mix inside the canister, which loses heat and gets colder and colder until it freezes. We kids stood around waiting to lick the dasher, glad salt hadn't crept into the metal canister holding the ice cream. The men put the cover back on the canister, and covered the freezer top with the burlap sack and carried it into the entry to the woodshed.

Then we kids trooped over to the base of the sandbank and squatted down and laid our hands flat and covered them with damp sand. When we pulled out our hand we had flatroofed sand houses. By then Roxie and Raymond were there with Aunt May and her husband George from Springfield. For a while, we built castles the way they said they built them at the beach in summer at Saybrook.

Finally, we heard Aunt Maud calling the grown folks to table, and we idled up to the sitting room for filled raisin cookies Gram had ready while we waited for second table. Out in the big kitchen, the air was thick with the voices of company. We could hear the clank of platters of chicken and winter squash and boiled onion, and sweet and white potatoes, and bowls of brown gravy and Gram's special sweetened gravy. There was plenty of everything for everybody.

Gram roasted six of her choicest Rhode Island Reds stuffed with bread crumbs mixed with butter and onion and sage. She herself chopped the heads off two others to make chicken pies with thick flaky crust to be doused with gravy. There were side dishes of sweet pickles, sour gherkins, black olives, watermelon pickle, and in the middle of the table a cutglass bowl of homegrown Concord grapes, blue pearmain, russet, Jonathan, Northern Spy, Red Astrachan, Delicious, Winesap and McIntosh apples. In the warming oven of the stove were at least a half dozen apple and mince pies, and on the side table three punkin pies each with just a touch of not-quite-burned in its brown custard filling. Plates of Cheshire Cheese and sage cheese, cut in generous chunks, took up the rest of space on that table. The oversize coffee pot was steaming on a middle burner. At either end of the great oval table was an English china pitcher of heavy cream allowed to rise down cellar in a pan from last night's milking. For anybody who had a taste for it, there were earthenware pitchers of sweet cider pressed a week ago and allowed to ripen. For Pop, her eldest son, Gram has seen to it he has his roast pork she cooked special, and Mom was there too for the only meal every year she took down at Gramp's.

When the folks filed into the sitting room, we saw Uncle Andrew Shaw with his beard and Aunt Sarah, and Gramp's brother Erwin and his wife and their daughter who wasn't Erwin's daughter. Gramp's sister Carrie was there with her husband, the only time in the year we saw them, and Gram's half-brother Jesse Richardson, a bachelor, whose grandfather carried a long rifle against the Redcoats at the battles of Lexington and Concord.

Pop and Maurice and Perry lingered at the long table telling stories while we youngsters sat at the round table between the stove and the sink. Maurice said, "Harry, you remember that Fourth of July we got out the parson's single seater and hitched a rope to both shafts, and you went up into the belfry with a pulley, and we hauled it up to the steeple?" And Uncle Perry, to keep up with his older brothers, "And we dragged Old Lady Doolittle's backhouse out onto the highway!"

Maurice cleaned up his slab of punkin pie. "You remember how we ganged up on that 'Hit the Nigger in the Head' at the fairgrounds?"

Pop said, "That was Glawn's doing."

"Maybe he put you up to it."

"We were all three of us in it."

"Three hicks from the hayfield. And Glawn was the worst shot of all, couldn't hit the side of a barn door."

Pop said, "We were none of us any great shakes that day. We kept coming back. The barker thought he had a barrel full of yahoos.

"Worked us up from the ten cent kewpies to the twenty cent candy to the fifty cent squawking dolls and we passed the ball from me to you to Glawn, and that darkie ducked his head one way or the other, and every time coming up grinning, 'Missed me, Mistah!'"

"Like he had a mouth full of Woolworth's five and dime false teeth."

"Grinning like a barn door!"

"And when we come to the Navajo blankets for a dollar, Glawn took his chance and missed the tarpaulin completely, and he come up 'Missed me, Mistah!'"

"And you took yours to the other side, and he dodged the other way."

"And you standing right behind me with your arm back and ball in your hand, and when he come up grinning, you drilled it right down the center and caught him in the middle of his 'Missed me, Mistah!'"

"You never saw such a sorry Nigger in your life, mouth full of teeth, and the barker over the counter, and we scattered in three directions."

"Never did get that Navahoo blanket."

"Lucky not to have got the law on us."

"Nawthin illegal."

Pop reached for minced pie, "You remember that night we woke up and the tabby just inside the woodshed cat-hole and Watson's tiger squalling up at the corner of the cowshed, and Iverson's black Tom at the corner of the house. You never heard such a caterwawling, woke up the whole house, and Maud running for a pail of water to throw down on the Iverson tom on the doorstone under her window."

"And you and me creeping downstairs and out the backhouse door, and you went around the barn and I around the house, and when you whistled, I pounced on the Iverson tom and you on Watson's tiger, and we tied their tails together and threw them over the clothes line."

"In about three seconds the Watson tiger up through the orchard, and the Iverson tom lighting out for the sandbank, and the two of them never back, took their courting elsewhere."

"What was the name of that tame crow you had, Perry?" "Copper, I called him copper."

"Well, I knew it wasn't cracker."

"Cracker was what I taught him to say."

"Yes, I remember, you fed him crackers, and got him to hang around. He'd be out there every night after school waiting for you."

"And he even came back next year."

"You split his tongue, and spent a whole year on him and all you could get him to say was 'Craaacker!' What ever happened to him?"

"Watson's dog got him."

Pop changed the subject, "This cranberry sauce is what the doctor ordered," and helped himself to another saucer.

Even if the roast chicken was mostly gone, there was plenty of chicken pie, to be moistened with Gram's sweetened gravy. She hung over us to see to it we got cranberry sauce and sweet pickles, and baked sweet potatoes and some of Gramp's extry dry winter squashes. And apple or punkin pie a la mode with enough of the homemade icecream to be pieced out for everybody.

Then Aunt Maud took over, "Now you sit down, Ma, and have some of your own cooking."

Aunt Pluma's voice from the sittingroom was asking Aunt Carrie or Aunt Sarah how they are doing and Gramp's voice came out to us talking business with Uncle Andrew Shaw. By the time we were full, the brothers have left the table and filed into the sitting room, and there was a thinning out of talk, as Mae Wilson was talking about getting ready to go back to Springfield, and Mom and Aunt Pluma and the younger ladies came back to the kitchen and let Gram take their place in the livingroom while Aunt Maud organized the clearing away and washing dishes at the sink and shooing us children out from under foot to send us to play hide and seek, or superintended by Loyce and Merle, we scooted across the road, and snaked up hill through the pines to the cemetery, trying to be first at the rim.

By the time we got back, Uncle Andrew and Aunt Sarah have left without our having hardly got sight of them, and Erwin and his wife and her daughter were leaving for home two doors away on the right side of the road, to wait for next year's invitation. And the Wilsons were in their car for the trip back to Springfield, where, we kids were thinking, Roxie and Raymond with their city ways can lord it to their hearts' content, and demonstrate to their neighbors the superiority of Saybrook sand castles to the houses we made by laying one hand down flat and covering it with sand with the other and patting it till we drew out our hand and each had our flat little house with its door wider than an Eskimo igloo's.

Uncle Maurice and Aunt Pluma said it's time to be getting along. They collected Loyce and Merle and Lynn and we all went out to see them off in their car, thanking Gramp and Gram for Thanksgiving, and shouting goodbye to everybody.

Back in the sitting room Gram arranged it with Mom that Mel and I would stay over till Sunday for her and Gramp to bring us home to the Farms in good time for supper and a full night's sleep before Monday morning school.

WICKED... and Spotless as the Lamb

Chapter Three

1918, I'm 7
Moving to valley

Gramp was closing the mill setting on Northfield Mountain, and Pop borrowed money from Gramp to take a second mortgage on the one held by Mrs. Royce on a frame house we could see on the main road across from the cemetery where the ferry road swung down to the river. There was a lawn swing in the dooryard. The old couple who lived there were too old. They would like to sell to a young family with children. Pop got Frank Howe to help with the ploughing and planted the backyard to potatoes. There was a pump organ in the sittingroom, and an oblong table in the diningroom. Mom and Pop would have a big bedroom on the ground floor, Mel and I would sleep upstairs in the east bedroom looking down on the road, and Clayton have the west bedroom all to himself. He could look out the window at the railroad tracks and the trestle over the ferry road.

The front yard of our house stood about three feet above the roadbed gouged out of a meadow that once was level ground from the cemetery on the back road to the slope into Frank Howe's pasture. There were two maples in the yard and between them when we moved there a lawns swing under its high frame. Just the thing for the old couple who lived there, it proved too jerrybuilt for a family of boys and was knocked to pieces for kindling, and was replaced by a hammock. On the south -- the narrow width of the house -- a porch looked down a gentle slope to the ferry road, worn with travel where it swung rightangle south to join the main road but so little worn where it swung north that a triangle of public land served as playground for us boys and the neighbors who soon flocked to our yard to play tag, hide and seek, or Pom Pom Peter Way or other games to fill in time between school and supper and after supper until dark. There was never enough time before we heard Mom calling us in or Mrs. Cota shouting from the Gainses's to call home the Cota girls and Buddy Cota at bedtime.

There were three trees in the south yard. a full grown maple, and two catalpa trees, a good sized one on the west in front of the first floor bedroom windows, and a skinny one in the middle. In spring their heavy blossoms saturated the air outside and inside the house. Mel and I soon discovered we could skin up the maple in no time and from the top branches look down on the roof slanting to the ridgepole. Mel got the idea of tying a rope around his waist pretending to be a mountain climber. When he got near the treetop the rope dangled over a branch and hung loose to the grass where I stood, looking up.

Mel yelled down, "Tie it around your waist, Lyle." I did.

"If I let myself swing down with the rope hanging over the limb, my weight will pull you where I am. We can play teetertotter. When I jump down you will come up, and then you can jump down and I will come up."

He launched himself just enough to be unable to reach the branch he jumped from and I was yanked up with my feet a yard from the ground. There we swung.

We both started yelling till Mom came running out the porch door. She tried to untie me, till Mel yelled not to because without me for ballast he would plunge to the ground. I was yelling bloody murder because my breath was being squeezed out. Such a short woman, Mom couldn't reach above my head. She grabbed me around the hips and adding her weight to mine, managed to pull Mel up to where he could grasp the limb and untie himself and drop the rope at our feet.

-O-

One morning when we got to school, the big kids were in an uproar. Miss Dalton couldn't control them. Lewis Woods and Bernice Billings in eighth grade brought flags. They wanted to have a parade. We were lined up in the road front of the schoolhouse. Lewis and Bernice formed two lines, big kids in front, small fry behind. Lewis and Bernice were in Sunday clothes, debating whether to send the rest of us home to change.

It was warm, a beautiful fall day. Some of the Polacks were still barefoot, but Mom has put her foot down. When school started, Mel and I had to wear shoes. We were excited because Uncle Chester, Mom's older brother, was in the army, and Uncle Perry, Pop's youngest brother, on a cattle boat ferrying beef to France for the troops.

Lewis was yelling, "Left foot! Right foot!"

We straggled across the bridge, Mel up front with the fifth grade, I in back with the first and second graders. Miss Dalton was behind, trying to keep us in line.

Some of the girls were carrying purple asters and goldenrod as if we were going to the cemetery for Memorial Day, but there was no time to collect Civil War Veterans. This was a victory parade to end the war against war. Miss Dalton had been reading to us from speeches of President Wilson. This was to be the end of the war against Huns who invaded Belgium and raped women and stuck little babies on the points of bayonets.

As we got across the bridge over Four Mile Brook, there was no sign of Miss Cooley, the librarian, in her dooryard, but across the road, Mrs. Charles Gilbert, our Sunday school teacher, was standing in her yard, apron in hand. Next door, Bernice's mother and grandmother waved us on. Gramma Lynch looked down from her front window, sitting in her rocking chair. She neither smiled nor frowned. There was nobody in sight at any of the houses between Gramma Lynch's and Woodses store. Lewis's father handed out penny licorice sticks but not enough to go round.

From way down a mile away we could hear the hoot of the ten o'clock freight rounding the bend, and flags bobbed as Lewis and Bernice started running past Ralph Lynch's and swung in on the station road to be on time for the engine steaming by, slowing down. At the throttle, the engineer was grinning and waving a gloved hand, and the brakeman standing on the bottom step, hanging on with one hand. Bernice almost dropped her flag, reaching out to him as he swept past.

We little kids got to the crossing just as the caboose lurched past. At the station, there was only the station agent.

One of the flags got tromped on when were hurrying. The asters and goldenrod were wilting in the sun. We lollygagged through the south yard of Frank Howe's between his house and his slaughter house, where the carcass of a pig was hanging, stripped of its skin. Frank and Fred Ruggles, whose pig it was, halted work to watch us go past, spitting tobacco juice into the bushes.

Nobody was in sight in the windows of Frank's house stretching to the main road. We turned across the culvert and up grade toward our house, where

Mom was at the jog looking out from under the cross piece dividing bottom sash from top sash. She was just tall enough to look under the cross piece.

Beyond our house, we left the road and swung across the stubble of cornfield to the cemetery, where the girls decorated the graves of Civil War veterans with their wilted flowers.

Back at school we had homeroom till lunchtime. Miss Dalton talked about the importance of the armistice. She told us we would all be remembering this day to the end of our lives. We sang the Star Spangled Banner and I raised my soprano so high on the top note that everybody up front turned around to gawk.

When Pop got home from work, he had read the late papers and learned it was all a mistake. The war wasn't over. There was another offensive going on over in France.

We went down to Frank Howe's for our bottle of milk, and Mrs. Royce was waiting for us. She gave us each a polished red apple and a stick of gum and said how she laid out a stock for every child in the parade, but if we were going to march past on the side of her house instead of in front on the main road, she would have nothing to do with us.

-O-

After supper chores, Mel and I went down into the cut in front of our house and practiced pitching and catching. Mel was the pitcher. He was practicing up for the ball team that played on the diamond behind the schoolhouse. He stood in the road even with the first maple tree in our front yard, and put me at the top of the slope down to the culvert where the road took a jog past Frank Howe's and swung towards Ralph Lynch's. At first Mel tossed the ball gently where I could catch it. If it was a wild pitch and went past me, it rolled a little way held in by the banks of the roadbed. I scurried after it and returned it with no trouble. In a short time he was practising his speedball. If it went wild to one side or over my head, I was chasing it halfway to Frank Howe's. He would be yelling after me for not being able to hold him. When I caught up with it, I was supposed to return it, no matter how long the throw. Sometimes the muscle in my right arm would start hurting like fury. If he was practising his curve ball, I stood it just so long, then when it was getting too dark to see after a really wild pitch, he would yell at me, "You can't catch anything!" and stomp off into the house. I'm half crying, trying to find the ball in the long grass alongside the road. Finally I'd have to give up

and go into the house half bawling, and Pop would send Mel out to help me. He'd be jawing at me, "Sissy! You play like an old woman!"

-O-

He marked off a diamond down in Frank Howe's pasture on the west side beyond the barbed wire fence on the level ground before the pasture falls off to the gully worn by the trickle of water flowing from the culvert under the road. Mel organized two teams divided between us and the Cotas and the Billingses and sometimes the Bartuses were there, and even Lewis Woods, and we played there evenings during summer vacation until called in for bed.

I was always put out in right field near the barbed wire just before the land falls off into the gully. To shag flies, Peter Bartus would bring his shaggy collie dog along, tumbling past trying to reach the ball before I could scoop it up and return it.

One Saturday night when we played late, none of our mothers calling us, it got so dark we couldn't any of us see anything. Peter hit a long fly in my direction, and Rover is after it. I am after it too as soon as I catch sight of it and Rover and I were both after it. Just as I had my glove on it, I tipped over the bank, and Rover was lunging on top of me, barking and shoving. He was on me, both front paws grasping, his long pecker pumping between my legs. He was really beginning to hump me.

I could hear Mel calling the game off. All I could think of was I had to get Rover off me and get up and out of there before anybody could see us, but it was already too dark, and when I crawled over the brow of the hill, I could hear them ahead of me already on the ferry road. Nobody paid attention when I caught up with them. In bed I lay awake thinking how the dog's pecker was pumping between my legs. I just as well could have lingered with him. Nobody would have known.

-O-

Pop got a job as section hand for the CV Railroad that ran up into Vermont and down to New London. From the station in back of Frank Howe's we were able to buy a ticket to Montague and walk the hill road along the ridge above Sawmill River until it pitched down and across twin bridges to the main road from Montague to Locks Pond. You waited a long time in Millers Falls for the passenger train to go through on the Boston/Maine. Then Montague was the

next station. The conductor helped you off, and then shouted, "All aboard!" even if nobody was boarding.

I was carrying my satchel. When I came to the first house, an old lady was leaning on the mailbox and watched me come along till I got alongside where she was.

She asked, "Yew be Harry Glazier's boy, bean't ye?"

I told her yes and she told me, "Say to your gram Mattie sends her greeting."

I pulled up the sandy stretch into the woods, wondering if I would meet any bears.

-O-

When it set on to cold weather, Mel and I took a water pail and a coal bucket and climbed up to the railroad track at the trestle and picked up chunks of soft coal where they fell off the tender. If we heard a passenger train or a freight coming, we crouched down in the gully behind our buckets to hide from the fireman or engineer.

The soft coal raised a stink in our furnace. We got all of us sick, and Pop had to get a ladder and climb on the roof, and let down a plumb at the end of a plumb line and clean out the chimney. Dr. Newton told us it was carbon monoxide, and it could kill us.

One night we were all in bed when the freight came around the bend south of us. It started blowing its whistle and blew all the way past. It woke us up and our neighbors. We went out in our nightgowns and found our chimney on fire. Pop put salt in the furnace, and he and Ralph Lynch went up on the roof with a ladder to drop in salt and baking soda and damp down the flames.

-O-

Saturday afternoons in spring Pop took me with him to work in the dooryard of the cottage of Mrs. Wooster. Mr. Wooster was a banker in Orange. He worked for Mr. Luey, who owned the big cottage at the ferry landing. Between the cottages was a high footbridge over a ravine. Pop brought Mrs. Wooster wild flowers she had never seen. She liked the flame flower that grew on the railroad embankment. I helped Pop pull weeds out of her lily of the valley.

You got in before the leaves grew and Pop lifted a square foot of dirt with a spade, and I got in there and pulled out long roots of crab grass on which clumps of green sproutings began to show between the flower roots. You could tell Lily-of-the-Valley because the leaves hadn't fanned out but their tender swordpoints would be sprouting up toward the sun. It was easy to separate the grass from the flowers if you got in there early. Pop said I was a great help because I was so close to the ground. I would squat down, being careful to keep clear of the patch we had already worked over. We had clippers to clip off the crab roots; you could pull out a foot or two without disturbing the roots of the flowers. After I pulled out the crabgrass, Pop let the spadeful settle back leaving the inchlong swordpoints sticking up and I packed fresh dirt around their roots. The ground was soaked with April rain and just beginning to dry out enough to handle. You had to get in there the right time between the muck of March and the dried-down hardpack of May.

Sometimes Mrs. Wooster came out to watch, but she didn't stay long. Along in June Pop and Mom asked if I would like to be Mr. and Mrs. Wooster's boy and go live with them in Orange and go to school there. I didn't think I wanted to, and they never brought up the subject again.

-O-

Pop and Mom dropped off Mel and me at Gramp's on their way to Moores Corner. Mom said to come up to Aunt Ruth's before supper because Gramma Briggs was living with her mother Abbie and Abbie's new husband Simon Pike up in a little house on the road to Locks Pond just this side of the Careys. Gramma Briggs wanted to see us. Gramma Glazier fed us early supper just in case, and up at the Corner Mom asked us if we had supper. We told her yes. Mom said, "If they ask you, be sure to say you already ate. They got plenty of mouthz to feed without you boys."

Gramma Briggs met us at the door. Abbie was an old lady. When it was time for supper, Abbie said, "Now you boys pull up your chairs to the table."

Mel said, "Thank you very much, but we already ate down at Gramma's."

Gramma Briggs said, "Oh, you can eat something."

But Mel said, "We're full."

They were having corn on the cob, and mashed potatoes and bacon and liver from a cow Simon butchered. He was a big man, humped into himself. He Hardly said anything. He chewed his food carefully as if his teeth hurt. He watched us boys as he chewed.

Gramma Briggs said, "This is your great grandmother."

When they finished their dinner, Gramma Briggs was clearing away, and Abbie was in the buttry. We can hear her beating an egg beater.

Gramma put on two extra plates. "Now you boys can eat some whipped cream cake."

Abbie came out carrying the cake slathered with whipped cream. It looked awfully good. They made room at the table. Gramma said, "Pull up your chairs."

They were all looking at us. Simon cleared his throat. Abbie was standing with a sharp knife cutting the first slice. She slid it carefully on a plate and put it at one of the empty places and stepped back.

She looked at us and said, "This one's for Melvin."

Mel said, "Thank you very much but we already ate."

Gramma Briggs said, "You can eat some whipped cream cake." Simon was looking at us with his sharp eyes. Abbie cut another piece and put it at the other empty place. They were all watching me. I remembered what Mom told us and what Mel said. I have my eye on the slice of cake Abbie just cut.

I said, "Thank you very much, but we already ate."

They ate in silence. It was getting dark out. Gramma went with us to the door. "Now the next time you come, bring your appetites with you."

She walked with us to Aunt Ruth's and Uncle Henry's. When we got there, Mom was waiting to see how we behaved ourselves. She asked what they had for supper. Gramma Briggs told her, "They wouldn't eat any whipped cream cake. They said they had already et."

Mel said, "We told them we had supper down at Gramma Glazier's. You told us to."

"Oh, I didn't mean you couldn't have whipped cream cake." She and Pop walked us down through the dark till we could see lights in the kitchen at Gramma Glazier's, then they turned back.

Gram was watching up for us. "Did you have anything to eat?"

Mel told her about the whipped cream cake. She said, "Well, I declare!"

Chapter Four

1919-'20, I'm 8,9

Working

That fall and winter we were going down to Frank Howe's woodlot to cut stovewood on shares, Frank to get half, we to get half. Mom put up our lunch and we started at 7:00. Most of the trees were new growth, fifteen to twenty years along. Pop knew how to spot and fell. You spot on the side you want the tree to fall. You have to raise the spot high enough so you can use the crosscut saw without dropping either end into the dust. At first Pop preferred to have Mel help him because he was old enough to handle one end of the saw, but gradually I learned to do my part. It was hard work getting down on one knee and working your end of the saw. If you let it drop from level, or raised it, the blade would bind. When it really snagged, Pop would yell, "Stop riding the saw!" and you knew that in spite of your best efforts you had done it again.

You were sawing from the side away from where the tree would fall. Even so, you had to be careful. When the tree branches at the top started to quiver, it was time to get your saw out in a hurry and jump back. If you stayed too long, the butt of the tree could rebound. If it never happened to us, that was to Pop's credit. He had a sixth sense on just when to scramble, and he put the fear of God into us with stories about what could happen if we didn't. In order not to tempt the tree to buckle, he didn't place the graft too high. or cut it back too far.

"You want the tree to fall away from you, not have the butt jump back and knock the stuffing out of you. If you mark it right it will fall exactly where you want it to fall."

I liked taking the axe and trimming off branches. Big branches you might have to take a couple of licks with the saw. From then on, you could finish off with the axe. When I was a really little kid, I topped off the little branches, but I got so I could judge how to take off a goodsized branch without leaving a prong that would grab ahold of you when you were working up the main trunk.

Pop made us pile the stovewood neat, not just throw it on the ground: "Saves time and trouble in the long run."

And he made us pile the brush in a tidy heap.

"You may as well leave the forest looking as spruce as you find it."

At lunch time we built a fire to warm our hands, and dry our mittens, and toast our sandwich. Toward the end of a cold winter afternoon, time stretched out as if it would last forever.

Sometimes Pop brought the .22 rifle. He could bring down a gray squirrel as far as you could see it, and he could see twice as far as I could. Mel learned to shoot, and so did Clayt, but I couldn't bear to see the little buggers crumpled and bloody. I never did learn to handle a gun. Pop never made fun of me for not, I just didn't want to, and once I stopped trying, nobody made me.

-O

Fishing was different. I never had much pity for a fish. No matter how beautiful a trout looked when you put him back in the water to wash him, he was pretty cold and fishy. We went as family up Four Mile Brook all the way beyond twin bridges where the brook forked. Beyond the fork there might be only a trickle into pools where you wouldn't think a minnow would fodder, but I caught some big ones up there. Pop bought us fish poles for each one of us as we come along, metal poles, with reels and a decent grade of line that wouldn't break if it snarled. We never learned to fly fish. For one thing those little streams didn't leave much temptation to throw out the line. We dug bait in our sinkdreen, and put it in a tin can. But we had a well-made creel that whoever was going fishing had the use of. I get so I liked best to fish by myself, and usually didn't take the basket, but cut a forked stick and forced one fork into the fish's gills, and out of the gullet and carried the string under my belt. I made my plans known ahead of time, and snuck out of bed from beside Mel at four o'clock and dressed and tiptoed downstairs and had some oatmeal from the double boiler and Mom would have put out a doughnut and a bread and butter sandwich.

Just before leaving the house, I eased back from the kitchen to the closed door of their room and if I heard a rustle from the mattress, pushed open a crack, and told Mom I was leaving, and heard her sleep-heavy voice, "Did you find the paper bag?"

I whispered, "Yes," my voice all breathy because she was awake for me.

When you turned off the main road up the brook road, there was a different feel to the air, a hush and a welcome. The ground under my bare feet

was damp and cold and you could hear the murmur of the brook, and reconsider what was already decided, whether to fish up so the fish couldn't smell you, or fish down so the bait dropped naturally from pool to pool. Like Pop, I fished down, partly because I wanted to get well along into the woods before I put in a line.

There was nothing like that quick electric tug when you started one and knew he was a good one. I was not one for much play but usually tipped up the pole quick to see if the barb was well planted, and if so, I yanked the trout onto the bank. If he stayed hooked, that was one thing, but if he flew off in the brush my heart clamped shut to find him before he twisted and flopped into the stream. I would drop the pole and pounce on him, and carry him up the bank and open his gills and shove the prong of the forked stick in, then out through his mouth, with no mercy for the dying stare in his eyes.

Along ten o'clock, the heat of the sun struck into the openings under the forest canopy, and I'd have my sandwich and doughnut, and lie in the sun. If I had a good string, I was thinking of stopping in at a few goodsized holes along the way downstream and calling it a day.

-O-

One October I walked under birches not far from our house. Sun filtered through birch hung with gold, ground under foot carpeted with gold, sky an intense bluer than blue. I felt lifted at a blending of birch bark spotted with black, of gold floating down at my feet, power in trees, sunlight, high blue sky, coming not only from outside but inside myself, not supernatural but nature expanded. I stood above and within, for the first time aware of my self and my world.

-O-

My first hiring out was to Gramma Lynch at her house on the left before Billings's, nearly up to the schoolhouse. She wanted me to weed her vegetables, a small patch the size of a goodsized quilt. She came along out with me to show me and make sure I know the difference between an onion and a blade of grass. She had onions and beets and carrots and a half dozen tomato plants she planted herself after the last frost end of May. Her son Charles did the spading, but he was too heavy and musclebound to get down to weed. She watched me weed the carrots to make sure I gave them enough room and not too much. After that she went back indoors, and came out in two hours, when I knocked to

tell her I've got the job done. She showed me one onion thrown out with a handful of crabgrass, and had me put it in at the end of the row. She paid me twenty cents for my labor.

-O-

Frank Howe came over to hire Mel to ride horse to cultivate his corn patch over the railroad track a half mile down the road beyond Ruggles's. When he found out Mel had taken a job hoeing corn for Charley Tenney down in the Meadow, he had to hire me. I histed myself onto the wagon seat behind Nellie. Frank had his cultivator laid on its side in the wagon bed. It took us fifteen minutes at least to get down there, and another ten to unhitch Nellie from the wagon, back her out from between the shafts and hitch her harness traces to the cultivator. Then he histed me aloft and handed me the bridle to guide her between the cornrows of his three-quarters of an acre. He hadn't ever bothered to clean out weeds. The soil was thin and sandy. I was supposed to keep her head up to prevent her snitching too many cornblades as we passed through. Then at row's end I had to cramp her around between the next two rows. Frank would be chewing tobacco and muttering, never making any conversation, spitting to left and right.

We could spend a whole hot July afternoon traveling between rows, then coming back between the next two. In the middle of it I could hear the Cotas, their voices carrying clear from half mile up the road, preparing to go swimming in the deep hole below the falls behind Woods's store. They seemed a continent away. I would be thinking, maybe we would get through in time to hurry into my suit and join them. I had cornsilk in my eye, and my sweaty shorts were stuck between my legs, my mouth was parched, and I was dying for a drink of water.

Daydreaming at the end of a row, I forgot to cramp hard enough on the bridle, and Nellie missed an opening and started to enter the wrong row, leaving one uncultivated. Frank didn't blame me but put all the blame on Nellie, pulling and hawling on the cultivator, trying to back her out of the wrong one and head her into the right one. He cussed in exasperation, his mouth filling with tobacco juice, his voice thicker and thicker.

"God damn you, Nellie!" he shouted, "when I say whoa! you back up!"
I couldn't tell whether he was stating a fact or giving her orders.

By the time we were finished with the last row, and got Nellie unhitched from the cultivator, and back between the shafts of the wagon, I could hear the Cotas returning. It seemed to take an hour to travel back the road to our house, where Frank stopped to let me down. He pulled out his watch from the breast pocket of his overalls, studied it and made it to be three and a half hours between leaving home and returning. He drew his leather money pouch out of his pants pocket, pulled apart the pursed lips and pawed out a handful of silver and carefully folded bills. Working his lips, he separated a quarter and a dime.

"One to four-thirty. I make it eggsactly three and a half hours," he said. "I b'lieve we agreed on ten cents an hour, same as last time. I make it thirty-five cents. I hope I can call on you next time less Melvin is 'vailable."

What I learned chiefly from Frank was how to make a load of hay. He came after me to help with the haying down at the Wooster cottage. I gathered from what he said it's his piece of land rented to the Woosters, who also bought butter and eggs from him and Mrs. Royce.

When I began to hay with him, he put me on the hayrack and pitched on. He placed the first forkful at the front right or left corner and followed with one at the corresponding rear corner, then placed two or three forkfuls on that side as needed between. He went around to the other side and did the same, then placed a goodsized forkful or two in the space at the rear, followed by a binder up front filling that vacancy. The next half dozen forkfuls filled in the wagon bed till the first tier was evenly loaded. My job was to direct a forkful this way or that as needed, and to keep the whole force of my body under it.

Sometimes he'd spell me by letting me load a while, then put me up on top of the load again.

"Tromp it down good," Frank directed. He stuck his fork into the side of the load and went up ahead to guide Nellie to the next stop among haystacks. I treaded down the load as it rose, and kept it from sagging to right or left or off the foot of the wagon. No matter how I would like to hurry, I knew it would be fatal to force so much on a load that half slides off on the three-quarter mile to the barn. It never happened except in my nightmare imagination.

At the very end of the afternoon, Frank would climb back onto the hayrack and let me pitch on. I got so I could get under a haystack and work the pitchfork into it till I collected it into one parcel, then putting my back under it and my hands

gripping the handle and arms muscled into the swing, I would raise it onto the load and place it exactly where it ought to be placed from Frank's example. I might be a runt, but I learned to lift more hay than a big fellow who doesn't have the least idea of the science of it.

Back at the barn, Frank always did the unloading, putting me up in the haymow. The sweetest sound in the world at the end of a hot afternoon was to hear tines scraping on wood and metal and know it was down to the wagonbed.

-O-

Charlie Tenney had the biggest and best farm in the Meadows. He owned more than 200 purebred Jersey cows and had the barns and the equipment and acreage to support them. He paid good wages. Mel got twenty cents an hour. The summer I was ten going into fifth grade, I stood around when he stopped in to hire Mel hoping he'd notice me, but he didn't pretend to, and I didn't get up courage to speak out. The next summer I did. He looked me over and said, "I don't have anything now, but if I need you later, I'll send word by Melvin." I didn't make out whether he meant it or if he was just putting me off. I knew I looked like a runt, but I was only a year and half younger than Mel and I could handle a hoe as fast and as good as he could.

Along toward the end of July at the height of the growing season, Mr. Tenney sent word, and I went down to the big barns and was given my hoe to go out in the fields and keep right up with the others. I didn't do any horse play when Mel and some other young fry started chasing each other through the corn rows.

Mom fixed my dinner pail and I ate lunch in the shade with the other men and listened to their joshing. There was a half dozen old hands and a half dozen young fellows like Mel hired for the harvest.

After I'd been there a week and a half, Charlie came around at lunchtime and, making his way through the old hands, stopping to talk to this one and that one, ended up where we young squirts were gathered. He joked with us, and then separated Mel and me from the others, and lowering his voice said to both of us, "Sat'dy afternoon we'll be through with the heft of it, and I can't keep but one of you on. I'll leave it up to you to decide which one stays."

Course I knew which it would have to be but I was feeling pretty good with myself. Come Sat'dy, Mr. Tenney was back, making his way again through the

company. After a while he idled over where I was sitting and motioned me aside and asked how it was going. I said, "Good." And he said maybe next summer he can hire me the whole season. Then he leaned over me and said soft so nobody else can hear, "Where you gittin your nubbins, boy?" He gave me a wink and a slap on the back and went his way. I know next summer I'll be back and I'll work my head off for him.

Chapter Five

1921, 5th grade

10 yrs old

When I was in the fifth grade and Kenneth in the second, he began to come down to our house. He learned where the doughnut jar was in the long pantry behind the partition back of the stove. You went in there from a doorless opening beside the sink. We boys were taught not to help ourselves between meals unless Mom invited us. Her rule was that if one of us had one, it means she had to even it up with the others. Doughnuts were kept in a widemouthed earthenware jar with a china plate on top. No matter how careful we tried to be, if we stole in there to help ourself, a low hollow sound rang out from the jar. Sometimes when Mom heard the plate scrape along the jarlid, it was Kenneth. She had to tell me only once that if he came to our house to play with me, he was my responsibility. Any doughnut he stole was as if I stole one. She couldn't be making doughnuts for all the kids in the neighborhood.

Kenneth lived in a big light-blue house where the meadow road turned west across the railroad tracks and joined the riverroad that twisted south to the ferry and followed the contour of the riverbank south to the Millers River coming in from the east, or north to the rich bottom land of Northfield Farms meadows. Between the road and the river for long stretches there was a high sandbank that Pop said may have been laid down by the glacier thousands of years ago. Where the river narrowed between wooded hills this sandbank petered out, and the river flowed narrow and deep.

Though Kenneth was younger, I let him boss me around, partly because he might like to play fuck and I didn't want to seem to be taking the lead. If he led the way to the icehouse behind his father's shop, I thought we would probably get into a wrastle there where nobody was looking, but I didn't unless he started it. In the halfdark, we wrestled in the sawdust, reaching for each other's cock, but as Kenneth played the game, you tried as hard as you could not to be touched. I tried just as hard to resist him as he tried to flop over on his belly and not let me get at him.

He tired of the game quickly and rushed off into the shop where Mr. Lynch kept whatever invention he was working on. For a long time he worked on a teeter-totter mounted on a four-wheeled wagon base. The trick was to convert the up-and-down motion of the seesaw into a forward motion for the machine. Also a problem, there had to be a steering wheel and somebody to steer. Where could he sit? He couldn't very well be one of the teeterers, who would be so busy going up and down they couldn't steer. If you put in a boxseat for a driver, he wouldn't be able to see around the seesaw and guide the machine. Once in a while Mr. Lynch brought his contraption out into the yard and scratched his head over the difficulty. He looked at us kids as if thinking of trying us out on the seesaw, but never did. Then he'd roll it back into the shop and leave it alone for a while. It seemed a shame he spent so much time and labor over such a complicated and handsome machine only to never get it to go anywhere. It was beautifully made, the wheels of handcarved spokes and wooden hoops with metal rims, and the seesaw a long plank of the best maple, flaring out into a broad seat at each end. He must have laid awake nights tormenting himself to make it work, but there was a technical problem beyond Mr. Lynch's ability to solve. He didn't leave the four-wheeled teetertotter out in the open very long, but wheeled it back in the shop and closed the door on it before anybody came along.

After playing in the icehouse, Kenneth often as not in a fit of temper grabbed a hammer and whacked at his father's invention, or threw the hammer across the shop wherever it happened to go. I got out in a hurry. Because I was a good student, his folks thought I was a good influence. If Mrs. Lynch was driving to Townsend above Brattleboro to visit her mother, she took me along to be company for Kenneth.

Sometimes Mr. Lynch would carry us boys along with him when he was visiting a lumber yard just south of Brattleboro, where he seemed to be part owner. He never did any work there but spent hours gabbing in the office with the managers. He was a tall, handsome, charming man. His father had been a legislator down in Boston. They were said to have money and never seemed to worry about making ends meet.

Kenneth often as not caught up with me on the way home from school and walked along with me. One day we were with Maggie Wentworth, the three of us

lagging along. Kenneth was trying to persuade Maggie to make a baby. He said you couldn't make a baby unless you put your peepee into her. That was the only way. It was easy as pie.

"You want to make baby, don't you?"

She allowed she might. "Well, you can't make a baby any other way."

We lollygagged past Frank Howe's and turned down in back of our house through the gone-to-seed vegetable garden and across the ferry road into a meadow west of her house, where there was a deep hollow and a screen of trees. He persuaded Maggie to lie down in the dead grass and pull up her dress. He said he and I will take turns helping her make a baby. I watched to see how it was done.

Maggie was just saying, "It tickles," when Mrs. Wentworth was standing over us.

"You boys get out of here! And, Maggie, you pull your clothes together and come with me, and don't any of you ever try anything like this again. If you do, your folks are going to hear from me!" Kenneth and I hiker out of there. We don't either of us want to have Mrs. Wentworth after us again.

-O-

Warren Billings and Catherine Scoble and Effie Johnson, the station agent's daughter, were always moseying along after school giggling and looking at paperback books Effie got every day from the train gang coming up from New London. If a freight train pulled into the siding to unload a shipment of grain for Mr. Gilbert, the young men tried to get Effie inside the empty boxcar. Other days they tossed her a paperback onto the platform as their train swept past, slowing down for the crossing.

One day Warren and Catherine and Effie invited me to come along with them. They had one of the paperbacks and were giggling and guffawing over it. One joke was about stewed tomatoes that were for some reason always served monthly. It meant nothing to me, but Warren seemed to have a special angle on it, and the girls were hilarious. The three of them howled over stewed tomatoes and couldn't seem to get enough of them.

Another story I understood well enough. It was about a boy named Fuckafaster. His mother had been out shopping, and when she came home after Fuckafaster's school let out, she couldn't find him anywhere. She heard a noise

from upstairs, and, on investigating, discovered it came from a closet whose door seemed locked from inside.

"Are you in there, Fuckafaster?"

A scrambling sound came from the closet. She rattled the door, shouting, "Fuckafaster! Fuckafaster!"

"God damn it, Mother, I am fucking faster!"

I had an abstract idea what it was about, but it didn't interest me.

We lagged along past Ralph Lynch's and across the tracks and turned north on the river road. Just beyond the turn from the station, there was a dark little brush-hidden shanty with a kicked-in door and dirty windows covered with cobwebs. We went in there, I lingering at the entrance, but Warren and Catherine and Effie went into a dark corner. When I didn't join them, they came out, and we turned back toward the main road. At the crossing Effie said goodbye and went toward the station. Catherine dawdled a minute, then said goodbye and turned back along the meadow road. Warren and I walked along toward home not saying anything.

The next day, Peter Bartus's older sister Annie in the seventh grade caught up with me. Warren and Catherine and Effie were just ahead, walking slow. Annie said quickly, "Lyle Glazier, I never thought you were that kind of boy!" We walked past the three of them and went along together.

I liked Annie. She stayed out of school in spring to help plant onion rows. The whole family were down in the muck, backs bent over the seedlings. They wore kerchiefs, five or six of them spaced out abreast of each other. One time Annie invited me to come along with her after they slaughtered a pig. She said I can have some blood pie. She smacked her lips. "You will love it." The thought of it made me sick to my stomach.

-O-

When I got home from school one afternoon the little Polish boy from across the field, the first house above the cemetery, came over and started following me around. For two or three weeks he was there waiting for me, poking around after me. About the third week, I went around the north side of the barn and downhill under the Northern Spy tree around the barn basement into the back garden. I expected him to follow and he did. When I reached down and touched him on his fly, he scooted back around the barn. I lingered, pretending

to have something to do. I looked up at the window of the sewing room to see if Mom could have been watching. I couldn't see her.

The next day when I got home from school, the ten-year-old sister of the boy was waiting for me, her black eyes snapping.

"You touch my little brother again, I'll tell my father! I'll tell your father! I'll tell your mother! I'll tell the priest!".

Chapter Six

1920 to 1923

Family at home

When we moved into the house on the main road, every night Mel went out to help Pop buck wood in the woodshed, and I stayed in the kitchen to help Mom. At first it was going to be turnabout, one helping Pop for a week and the other helping Mom then shifting around the next week, but the second week -- after his turn with Pop -- Mel was off like a shot to the woodshed as soon as we finished supper, and I was left helping Mom.

Mom told me she always wanted a girl, but never had one after she had a girl baby born a year after I was, but the baby starved to death because she couldn't take mother's milk. They tried cow's milk and condensed milk and soaked a clean cloth with both kinds and let the baby suck on it, but the little thing couldn't catch on. By the time the doctor got out to the Corner from Montague, it was too late.

In that first cold fall we lived there, I liked staying in the warm kitchen. I became her helper with cleaning and baking and getting down the tubs Monday morning before we went to school, filling them with water for washing and rinsing, and filling the big copper kettle on the stove with water that had to be heated for the washing tub, and for boiling the white clothes. Mom had a scrubboard for washing the clothes in the first tub, and a wringer for sending on to the rinsing tub or to the kettle on the stove if they were white. Colored clothes couldn't be boiled. They all had to be wrung dry to the clothes basket and carried outdoors to hang on the line in good weather, or inside the barn floor in winter or rainy weather. It was a big job taking all morning, and during school year, I had to be on the way to school before Mom much more than started. Sometimes I helped with ironing after school.

One time Gramma Briggs was visiting, and she and I were both wiping dishes. I liked hearing them talk about Moores Corner. My chest got all puffed up with importance and emotion to be there wiping tumblers and hearing them talk. As Gram and I were putting tumblers on the shelves of the homemade cabinet in

the corner beside the kitchen table, I said to Gram, "Mom has a lot of nice tumblers."

Mom was at the sink washing, and sniffed, "I'd like to see the day when I have tumblers. Jelly glasses, dried beef glasses, peanut butter glasses--where are my tumblers I'd like to know?"

In the Boston paper, there was a column called "The Married Life of Helen and Warren" about a business man and his wife who traveled to London and Paris and Rome for his business trips.

While Warren was busy during the day with his importing business, Helen was shopping in clothing and jewelry and curiosity shops, and came home loaded with jewels and linen and lace and other remarkable bargains for her friends. When Mom's friend Esther Paddock and her husband were visiting us overnight, Mel and I had to give up our bedroom and sleep in the three-quarter bed in the sewing room downstairs. They didn't have any children, and I thought Esther's clothes wonderful. I got up courage to ask her if the ruffle on one of her blouses was "Venetian lace." Mom and Esther both laughed. After Esther was gone, and we were doing dishes alone the next night, Mom said, "That Venetian lace you were admiring is just Esther's hand embroidery. I'm too busy darning socks for my menfolks to have time for such trumpery!"

One time we raised a pig down under the barn, and Frank Howe butchered it in the fall after we'd been fattening it up with slops and garden garbage all summer. We put salt pork in brine in a big pottery jar down cellar near the coalbin. For a while we had chops and ribroast and, later, ham cured in Frank Howe's smoke house and in winter we could go down and scrape around in the brine to find another slab of salt pork to go with boiled potatoes and milk gravy. I think I liked "pok" (as I called it) better than anything, better even than roast chicken.

Those were happy days, but along in late spring, when the very last smidgen of ham was gone, and you came up empty-handed when you felt around in the brine for another chunk of fatmeat, Mom had to wait supper to see if Pop brought home a package from the butchershop, and Sunday we might have to scoot up to Woods's store for a package of salt codfish, if we had that much money, or we may have to make do with last summer's old potatoes and milk gravy.

Sunday afternoon after dinner I was sitting in the big rocking chair in the dining room reading in The Book of Knowledge borrowed from the library, paying no attention to Pop at the table in shirtsleeves and Mom standing at the west window looking out over the henyard and the dead grass of last summer's garden, and on to Frank Howe's cow pasture and the CV tracks.

I came out of my dreaming to hear Pop saying, "I don't know where the money's coming from," then Mom complaining again, "I wish I'd had the sense to go back to Flatbush when the Adlers were after me to."

Yanked out of my book, I was thinking I was never going to get married. I sank back into my book, refusing to be bothered by their picking at each other.

When I looked up, the door to their bedroom was closed. Along late in the afternoon, Mom came out and flew around getting maybe pancakes and the last dregs of maple syrup for supper. She was humming to herself and seemed in a trance even deeper than my bookdreaming.

-O-

We were an on-again off-again religious family. We were pretty religious.

My earliest religious recollection was of the mouldy religious odor of cushions in the seats at Moores Corner Church, up the steep hill from the schoolhouse and, except on special occasions, closed during week days. Both sides of the family had been attending Sunday morning Sunday school and meeting, and Saturday night socials since the church was built.

From Northfield Farms sometimes we rented Frank Howe's horse and buggy and in good summer weather drove back home 10 miles and two miles more to a revival meeting in a pine grove on the west shore of Locks Pond.

Mr. Anderson, recently from Scotland, held the Hell-bent-for-election sermon and officiated at the popcorn confession. First one and then another seedy character testified to his graceless condition and his sudden vision of the light. As the foot stomping and "Praise the Lord!" gathered headway the inner temperature rose in the souls of sinners and blessed. A dozen hands at a time were raised when a new call came to walk the sawdust trail. Aunt Maud whispered to Pop: "All the corn is popping at once!" To my mind it was not a moment for levity. Where we children were gathered at the back, I pushed up my hand when the call came for show of hands. I couldn't bring myself to walk down the aisle, but felt ashamed to be going to Heaven by the back door.

I loved revival hymns like

"Shall we gather at the river
where bright angel feet have trod,
shall we gather at the river
that flows by the throne of God

Yes, we'll gather at the river,
the beautiful, the beautiful, the river
gather with the Saints at the river..."

But most of all I loved the one that goes:

"There is a fountain filled with blood
drawn from Immanuel-el's veins
and sinners dipped within that flood
lose all their guilty stains,
lose all their guilty stai-ai-ains,
lose all their guil-il-ty-y stains,
and sinners dipped within that flood
lose all their guilty stains."

After the service, Mr. Anderson came back to us kids and said, "Suffer little children to come unto me..." and he put an arm across our shoulders, and that night after the long ride in the boot of the buggy back to Northfield Farms, I lay half asleep and felt myself being lifted by the arms of Jesus and carried away into blessed communion with Him. I could be so filled with love for Him, it was as if we were melting into one another.

For a few weeks after a revival, the folks were taken with contrition for backsliding, and we passed the BIBLE around the table for reading, each one of us one verse, and passing the book along. But in a short time we became so numbed by the "shew"s and the "begot"s and the slaying of "foreskins" that we gave up and backslid again.

Gramma Briggs's lemon pies were famous at Moores Corner socials, and Aunt Maud played the organ. Gramp and Gramma Glazier, though they always

welcomed the quarterly late-afternoon tithing visit from Mr. Truesdale, and laid on an extra plate for supper, and bowed their heads for his prayer, never otherwise had prayer at table, not even at Thanksgiving.

At Northfield Farms, our whole family always attended Sunday night service in the upstairs at the schoolhouse. Mrs. Frank Montague was in charge of the music and getting a speaker. We children were invited to her house to prepare hymns. Lewis Woods played the piano. After rehearsal, Mrs. Montague passed the fudge and saw to it we each had one piece and no more. When Lewis went to Boston to school, Mrs. Montague took his place at the piano, laboring great thumping chords out of the instrument and singing an offkey soprano against Pop's tenor. For special programs, we went to Mrs. Montague's for a string of rehearsals for a midweek event to raise money for paying the Sunday preachers a few dollars expense money for driving back and forth. We mostly had a revival meeting week after week, when the deacons of the Trinitarian Church or the Undertaker, or sometimes the barber, came down to lay up honor in Heaven by saving souls. I liked the special programs because Mrs. Montague thought I had an unspoiled soprano. She put me at the front of the stage singing something like THE MARCH OF THE WOODEN SOLDIERS, which she tutored me to sing dramatically with spaces between syllables:

The toy shop door is locked up tight and ev
ry thing is qui et for the night when sud den ly the clock strikes
ONE the fun's be gun

I loved showing off, but Mom said she didn't understand why Mrs. Montague always wanted me to sing, when Melvin had a better voice. When my voice changed and Mr. and Mrs. Montague moved to Northfield Main Street, I stopped singing solos. Mrs. Montague could be president of the school board and Frank became active in the Masons.

-O-

My brother Clayton started school in 1919 when he was five. Mom asked me to take care of him and see he got back and forth OK, but he didn't want or need any help. One night after school one of the Polish boys and I were playing tag in the schoolyard, and he let me chase him into the girls' backhouse. I managed to get my knee between the door and the doorjamb, trying my darndest to get in. Although he was younger than I, he was bigger and stronger so I was

surprised when the door yielded to my pressure. There was only one small window high on the north end, and when I fumbled around for him, he had got his back against the closed door and took my hand and put it on his hard pecker inside his overalls. It was the first time I felt a pecker that size since Arthur and I slept together years ago. I started trembling.

There was a pounding on the door. I could hear Clayt outside wanting to be let in.

"Don't pay any attention!" Frank said, putting my hand inside his fly.

We had no right to be there in the girls' part. I was trying to free my hand, but I was burning with excitement. Also, I was scared somebody would find us. The little square of light from the high up window suddenly darkened. Clayt managed to climb up the outside wall. I could feel his presence up there trying to look down and see what was going on. I got my hand into the crack between the door and the jamb and managed to pull it open and run out, Frank close behind. I ran across the baseball diamond. I wanted to get away from Clayt, running behind. I thought I could run fast enough to get away where Frank could catch up with me and we could be alone, but he circled back toward the schoolhouse. I turned back and Clayt and I walked home. The next afternoon Frank left early with the truck carrying home kids from the Meadow.

By the time Clayt was in the third grade, Number Four School had become so large, it had to be split in two. I moved upstairs in the sixth grade with Miss Doolittle, Clayt downstairs with Miss Ingraham. He was so smart his teacher sent a note home recommending double promotion to fourth grade at the end of the year. He learned so much from listening to the older kids that he began to catch up with them. She thought he was wasting time and could get into mischief from having too little challenge. Melvin had skipped a grade when he came back from a year out at Grampa Glazier's, having Helen Beebe for a teacher. But nobody ever suggested I was smart enough. I feel belittled by having two brothers promoted faster than I, Melvin already in high school. When Pop and Mom asked us older boys for advice, I said I thought Clayt would miss a lot by skipping a grade. I don't know what Mel said. Anyway the folks advised against promotion.

The next year when I was in the seventh grade and Clayt in the third, he and Miss Ingraham had a terrible spat. He told me his side of the story, and after

school, I went into the downstairs where Miss Ingraham was helping slow students, and in no uncertain terms laid her out in lavender for treating my brother so. The next night after school both teachers kept me after to apologize to Miss Ingraham. I refused, and Miss Doolittle got out the horsewhip that is used to set an unforgettable example.

They sent word for Mr. Gilbert, the janitor, to come to witness. A lot of children got wind of it and collected on the closed-in stairs to upstairs. It was momentous. I had never been punished by a teacher. Nor Melvin. We had always got A in every course.

Miss Doolittle was doing the talking because she was my teacher. "You have no right to go into Miss Ingraham's room and talk to her the way you did. What made you do it?"

I realized I didn't have much on my side. I mumbled something about, "Clayton told me..."

"Clayton told you what? What Clayton told you was between him and Miss Ingraham. It wasn't up to you to correct her."

I mumbled an apology.

"Speak up, boy! we want to hear you."

"I apologize to Miss Ingraham."

I never told anybody, and the word didn't get back to the folks. But the next time Pop set out to punish me by making me cut an apple tree sprout, I told him I was too big to be licked, and I wouldn't be licked. He let me get away with it and never tried to lick me again. Clayton was there in the offing peeking around the corner of the barn.

-O-

Our eighth grade teacher Ruth Wilder got gossiped about by our fathers and mothers because she went out with Stanley Pod-lenski. She was a great teacher. Friday afternoons the last hour of the week, if we behaved ourselves, she read aloud to us.

She made us memorize the first lines of EVANGELINE. I loved the beginning and never forgot the gist of it, though, somehow, the second line had a way of disappearing:

This is the forest primeval, the murmuring pines and the
the hemlocks...

Stand like druids of eld...

When I had to recite it, I forgave her for insisting on putting the missing line back. We instantly forget it for the sad story of Acadians, which I made the mistake -- Miss Wilder reminded me -- of not knowing the difference between Acadian and Arcadian. The squabble between English and French melted into fable.

She read chunks of Cooper's story of Leatherstocking, and I shrank in my seat at the fright of Elizabeth Temple and her friend Louisa on a forest path "...where the fierce front and glaring eyes of a female panther fixed on them in horrid malignity, ...threatening instant destruction.

"Hist! hist!" said a low voice... 'stoop lower, gal, your bonnet hides the creater's head."

The magic of Miss Wilder's Friday afternoons carried me back to Grampa Glazier describing how Brushy Mountain must have looked in 1790 when Jonathan Glazier came there to cut virgin timber. Like Grampa, Cooper took me back to the great forest:

"The elm, with its graceful and weeping top, the rich varieties of the maple, most of the noble oaks of the American forest, with the broadleafed linden, known in the parlance of the country as the basswood, mingled their uppermost branches, forming one broad and seemingly interminable carpet of foliage, that stretched away towards the setting sun, until it bounded the horizon, by blending with the clouds, as the waves and the sky meet at the base of the vault of Heaven."

I grieved over the death of Leatherstocking. He was over eighty, in the mountains far west of the Mississippi. His friend Chingachgook was dead. The dying pioneer was surrounded by Pawnees who adopted him. Between his feet was the head of his old hound Hector, who, dying just before his master, was skinned and stuffed by the kind Indians.

At Christmas. Miss Wilder taught the whole fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades a carol in Polish. She cautioned us to keep it secret till our program upstairs in the school house Friday evening. That evening we children, kept downstairs in the room for the lower grades, heard with special excitement our folks entering the downstairs hall, stomping snow from their feet, and their voices dwindling as they climbed the enclosed stairs to the second floor.

Finally it was time for us to march upstairs, the little kids first. We could hear the buzz of conversation surging down the staircase and the clapping as each grade was introduced by its teacher and made way to their chairs.

At last we upper grades were formed in four lines across the back of the stage. We stopped pulling and tugging at each other. We could hear the hushed voices of our parents. We could smell the scent of the fir tree swathed with ropes of tinsel and popcorn and red and green paper chains, and decorated with ornaments, and, most of all, loaded with presents. We were each one of us searching for the faces of our father and mother. The hall became quiet. This year the Polish carol came first.

As the unfamiliar language and the sad/happy music swept over the audience, there was a deeper hush in the hall. Mothers and fathers looked at each other. Handkerchiefs were taken from pockets. Tears were wiped from the corners of eyes. There was such a dead silence that we were shocked at what we had done. Have we mispronounced words? Spoiled it? Miss Wilder and Miss Ingraham were smiling. The faces in the audience were changing from crying to smiling. Miss Wilder gave us a sign and we were singing "Joy to the World." She motioned for the audience to join. I heard Pop's high tenor and Mrs. Charlie Lynch's operatic soprano competing with each other as they did in Sunday night meetings. Everybody was singing. Polish fathers and mothers were singing, never minding their bad English.

Late in the spring, Miss Wilder gave us another kind of lesson. Miss Doolittle, last year's teacher, came for a visit. News of her coming preceded her. There was a unanimous, near-spontaneous boycott of her presence. No girl approached her at lunch to offer an apple or a greeting, and, of course, we boys kept our distance. The next day Miss Wilder called a special assembly to let us know what she thought of us.

"I was so ashamed of you. I have never seen anything so cruel. She came back here to visit, and not one of you -- not a single one of you -- had the decency even to speak to her. I consider it an insult to her and to me. Did you never once consider how it reflects on me that I would let my school behave the way you did?"

I was ashamed of myself. She made us all feel ashamed. There was no way to inform her that it was exactly because we loved her so much, exactly the difference between her and Miss Doolittle, that led to our snub.

Chapter Seven

1924-5-6, High School

Red MacDonald

By the time I was ready to go to high school, the Number Four Schoolhouse had increased in size so Charlie Tenney provided a box mounted on a truckbed for a bus. There were two small windows one on each side, and a tiny window at the front looking into the driver's cab; also a door at the rear reached by a couple of steps hanging down. Inside were two benches, one on each side running the length of the bus. There was a lot of rough housing by kids who made no pretense of studying, but I did my homework on the half hour ride to and from Northfield. Every day going and coming I did my Latin and Math assignments. Written work in English or History I did at home, where I did long reading assignments.

Melvin was two years ahead of me and was president of the junior class. To my surprise when Freshman elections were held I was elected president though I was no politician and knew just enough to call a meeting to order and adjourn it at the end. I depended on Miss Lawley, our teacher class advisor, to cue me in on business for each meeting. She lent me a copy of Roger's Rules of Order.

After about a month we rode in one evening from the Farms on the bus for the yearly party given by sophomores for freshmen. A few weeks later it was the freshmen's turn to return the courtesy. However, Miss Lawley told us the teachers decided it had become too much trouble bringing students in from all over town in the evening, so this year the freshman party would be held at the end of afternoon classes on a Friday. None of my classmates spoke up in meeting, but they came to me and let me know they were indignant the teachers made the decision without consulting us. They had been talking to sophomores who wanted the party in the evening. The next thing, at recess a petition was placed on my desk by the president of the sophomore class and I signed it on the top line. He was carrying the paper around in the home room and a half dozen

other freshmen signed right after me. Then he took it back where his class was sitting and collected signatures there.

That Friday at the end of our weekly assembly program, Miss MacDonald announced she was puzzled what to do with a scrap of paper that had been placed on her desk. She didn't know who put it there or what she was supposed to do with it. She looked entirely confused by it. She held it up for all to see. From end to end of the big home room, students were craning their necks to see what Miss MacDonald was holding up.

"Up in this corner, it seems to say..."...she took off her glasses and squinted, then put them on again..."Freshman party." She looked more puzzled, then continued..."and down here it says, '..at night' and over here it says, 'afternoon'. There are some names written on it. Can anybody tell me what it is about?"

She was looking at the sophomores. She wasn't looking at me, but I was hot and bothered because my name was the first one.

"Can anybody tell me anything about this mysterious paper?"

I knew Mel in the junior class hadn't signed it because he told me. But Miss MacDonald wasn't looking at anybody but the sophomores.

"Doesn't anybody at all have a clue to this paper?"

She continued to look at the sophomores.

I could feel my knees shaking, but I stood up and cleared my throat, wishing the floor would open under me. Miss MacDonald and all the teachers, and the whole room full of students were turning to look at me.

"It is a petition."

"Ah! So that is what it is -- a petition. Now we are beginning to have some light thrown on it."

She studied the paper.

I was wetting my lips with my tongue.

"It is a petition to hold the freshman party at night."

"Well, why doesn't it say so? Who made out this petition?"

She made it sound silly. She was holding the paper out away from her as if it had a disease that was catching. She was still not looking at me but at the sophomores.

"Will whoever made out this petition please explain it for all of us."

I sat down.

Nobody said anything.

"If nobody lays claim to it, I guess we will have to consign it to the dead letter office."

She leaned over and dropped it in the wastebasket.

We sang the national anthem. On the way out of assembly, Fay Smith congratulated me on my courage in speaking up to Mary MacDonald. He wondered if we ought to start another petition. On Monday nobody mentioned it. Miss Lawley came to our meeting and helped us set up committees for our party. We held it on a Friday right after school. Everybody admitted it was a pretty tame affair.

-O-

Red MacDonald taught Latin. Sometimes she entertained us with a trip she took the past summer by freighter to the Mediterranean -- to Rome or Athens or Cairo to learn about ancient people. I was nearly outside myself to hear one of her stories. I could hardly imagine what it was like to have such adventures as her walks on the hill above the Roman Forum, viewing the cellar holes of mansions of Roman patriots we read about, or, another summer, on the acropolis in Athens. I tingled with eagerness to go there someday. Hearing Miss MacDonald was the next best to going myself.

She held her four Latin classes in the home room, going where each class was seated according to year. Freshmen were sitting facing the front on the far right, and seniors by the row of windows on the north side, far left. I pretended to be studying other lessons when the seniors had their class, but I didn't miss a word of what Miss MacDonald was saying. One day she asked a question nobody answered. She looked way across the room and said, "I bet that freshman could answer," and I could have but was glad she didn't call on me. I pretended to be busy with homework, but was really listening in on that class still.

At the end of the year when they had a few lessons in Greek, I could hardly wait to be in their place and have my turn when I would get to be senior.

-O-

There was a gangling boy we called General, grandson of the school doctor, who lived in a brick house north of the high school. He began to fuss at me and play tag on the playground during noon hour, and ran away for me to

chase him. One rainy day in the boys' john where we were all crowded in together because there was no gym or any other common room, General got me down on the floor and was trying to rip my fly. I really wanted him to, but Mel's best friend came rushing over to rescue me, yelling, "Get off that little fellow, you big lug! You ought to be ashamed on top of a boy half your size!"

That was toward the end of my first year.

In August that summer Ralph Lynch called me to his house and said he had a couple cords of stove wood that needed splitting. It was in a clearing about a quarter of a mile up Four Mile Brook above the schoolhouse. He wondered if I'd like to split it. He would pay me 10 cents an hour. I took the job. He lent me his ax. It was a big woodpile, enough to keep me busy nine hours a day for two or three weeks Mondays through Saturdays.

I borrowed Pop's sledge hammer and a big wedge and a small one. I was there every morning at seven. Once or twice the first week Mr. Lynch drove up to see how I was doing. I'd had practice splitting wood at home. I loved the feel of the ax. More depended on skill than on how big the splitter was or how much he weighed. When I swung the ax from ground level in an arc over my head, the weight of the ax head carried up, over, and down and would split a good sized chunk. If a chunk was knotty, I creased it across the middle with the ax until I could fit a wedge in the crack. I'd learned to spread my legs and take a good grip on the ground, then raise the sledge hammer in a long arc and let its whole weight fall. You had to keep your eye on the wedge. I got pretty good at it. For a real knotty chunk, I might have to use the second wedge to fetch it.

In my head I started figuring how much I was going to make. It was the biggest job I'd ever had. At ten cents an hour, if I stayed through to five o'clock, it would come to 90 cents a day if I worked a full nine hours. I didn't intend to round it off at anything less.

Along late in the morning one day, General and a stranger drove by in a jalopy and saw me and parked and came over. They were going up Four Mile Brook to swim and wanted me to come along. I said I couldn't take any time off. It was along about ten-thirty. They went along. I could have just as well gone with them, but I didn't. Soon it was running through my head what it would have been like to swim bare naked with General and his friend. I was thinking: if they haven't come back by noon, I will take my lunch and walk up the brook a ways to

see if I come up with them. My mind was so full of it I barked the ax handle bringing it down wrong. Up to now I'd been awfully careful but I lost my aim. Little slivers of wood stood out just below the steel head. I tried to keep my mind off General. He and his friend came back down by around a quarter to noon, and waved to me as they sailed past. After they went on, I thought about how I should have told them to come back tomorrow at noon. They never came. I thought about them a lot.

-O-

When I finished the job, I turned in the ax to Mr. Lynch, who looked at it and said he'd have to take off a dollar for a new ax handle. He paid me exactly what he owed minus the cost of the handle -- \$9.80 in all. I'd been counting on the full ten eighty.

A week later he came by our house and told me he'd sold the wood to Mr. Luey, who used to spend summers in his cottage beside the ferry landing but had just retired as a banker in Athol, and built him and Mrs. Luey a big new retirement home where the ferry road meets the river road up hill from the cottage. Mr. Luey wanted me to come down to talk about my piling the wood in his new woodshed after Mr. Lynch had it trucked from the woodlot.

I walked down to see Mr. Luey, who offered me another ten cents an hour. It would take up a good part of the week of vacation I planned on, but I took the job.. Mr. Luey came out of his new house to watch see if I knew enough to make a straight wall in the front row before tossing the loose firewood behind. He didn't say a word about how it should be done, but he watched carefully -- talking about the weather and how much he and Mrs. Luey were looking ahead to living at the Farms the year round. Finally he was satisfied. I got another five dollars. I hoped Mr. Luey would ask me how I was doing in high school but he didn't. He was a big man dressed up in his banking clothes, and I got the impression time was hanging heavy on his hands.

-O-

My sophomore year, on the afternoon of the first day of school after Labor Day, as I left the front door of the high school, I could see our bus at the sidewalk and beside it a group of kids talking excitedly. I hurried to join them. They'd just learned from Ed Tenney, the driver, that down at the Farms some first grader on the way home from school had been run over by a car. I crowded in to join in the

gossip. It happened just below Lucy Ross's where the road pitched downhill to Woods's store. A car coming uphill hit one of the children trying to dodge across the road. Everybody was trying to guess who the kid was and whether it was at the end of the school day or on the way to or from lunch. There was a difference of opinion, some arguing heatedly for noon hour and some for right after school. Some thought the child was returning from lunch, some were sure the accident happened on the way home. Some thought it was a boy, some were sure it was a girl. They were all guessing who it was and just how the accident happened. As each new Farms student came out of the building, someone passed on the information.

Seeing Mel approach I yelled before anybody else had a chance, "A kid got run over down at the Farms." Then although I hadn't been there to hear Ed's account of it, I added, "Ed Tenney just told us!" I turned back to join the others. Some thought the child was seriously hurt, some thought it was just a scratch and the child got up and walked home. Esther Tenney because she heard the news from her uncle had a voice of authority. She claimed the wounded child was probably killed. At this a silence descended but only for a minute. It was surely a great tragedy. How could it have happened on a road so many of us traveled time and again?

Ed blew the horn for us to board the bus, and we crowded into the dim interior. I didn't take out my Latin book as I ordinarily would to study the first lesson Miss MacDonald had assigned. Julius Caesar had been on my mind as I came out of the high school. "Veni, vidi, vici," my mind had been full of it, of the great conqueror, the Great Julius Caesar, the Roman Emperor, and what he said as he approached Rome. I could see him in his battle dress. I could hardly wait to read him, but now I put the book in my bookbag and tried to push my voice into the shouting voices all trying to be heard. It was a pushing and shoving of voices, and I couldn't keep out of it. Melvin was sitting over opposite. He wasn't saying anything. When I tried to yell at him across the current of excitement he gave me a look that silenced me. Did he know something? I started to open my mouth to shout above the din at Warren Billings, who was sitting beside Melvin. They would ordinarily have been gabbing together. A feeling came over me shutting my mouth and closing my ears to the hubbub. I looked at Melvin, who was staring straight ahead and paying no attention. He was keeping his mouth

shut when he didn't know what he was talking about. How much did I know? Only what I picked up from others who didn't know any more than I did.

I reached in my bookbag and started to take out my Caesar, then shoved it back. It was Larry's first day of school. He had been excited that morning when we left to catch the bus at Woods's store. I had forgotten him in my excitement over Julius Caesar and then I became so swallowed up in the accident, I couldn't study. Now I realize I don't know anything about the accident. I shut my mouth and didn't say another word all the way home. Mel and I were both silent. The others were still shouting. They didn't notice us. I was sure now when we got home Mom won't be there. I hoped I was wrong.

-O-

Mom was over at Farren Hospital where they had taken him. Pop was there too, gone straight from the Tool shop. Gramma Briggs was home with Clayton. She fixed supper. She let us stay up. Clayt said Larry didn't see the car coming. When he saw it he dodged across the road to be on the other side with the other kids. He didn't make it. It took time to get an ambulance. The driver of the car was from Warwick. He stayed around till the ambulance came.

When Pop came home, Mom wasn't with him. Pop told us it had been touch and go. Below the right shoulder the bone was broken off from the ball in its socket. The doctor thought the operation was successful and Larry would get back the use of his arm, but it would take some time to know for sure. He had come out of it alive, that was the main thing.

It turned out the driver was a selectman from Warwick. He didn't have insurance, but it looked as if he would help pay for the hospital.

-O-

I was 14 years old when I started piano lessons. Mom always wanted to take lessons, and was jealous of Aunt Maud for being able to study with Mabel Lincoln, who lived in Montague and had students in Moores Corner and as far away as Millers Falls. When Mom was a girl she managed to get possession of a melodeon, a small pump organ, but lessons were out of the question. When we moved from the shanty to the house on the Ferry Road, an Estey pump organ, full size, came with the house. Mom knew how to pull out various stops and pump it to play songs from the operas and hymns. I learned to love the

melodies, and she taught me to play some of them, but I never really expected to be able to take lessons.

Then suddenly in the late summer just before my sophomore year, I went home and found Mom and Pop had traded in the organ and a ten dollar bill for an upright piano. Mom told me she and Pop decided they could afford to have me take lessons if it didn't cost too much for music. They thought they could afford a dollar a week. She wished I could study with Miss Lincoln but the easy way was for me beginning September to get excused during the day and go down street and have lessons with Miss Marian Webster, a graduate of New England Conservatory of Music.

All this seemed to be lost when Larry had his accident the first day of school. It was a long pull in the hospital. They let Mom stay in Larry's room sleeping on a cot. The afternoon she came home she said it would still be a week before Larry came home. I said, "One thing, the piano will have to go."

Mom said, "Hush! You are going to take lessons."

It turned out we didn't get anything from the Warwick selectman. It might have been all right, but Uncle Howard, Aunt Maud's new husband, went along with Pop to see the man, and Uncle Howard tried to scare him by threatening a lawsuit. To hear Pop tell it, Howard got on his high horse, and the selectman got mad, and said, "Damned if I pay a red cent." When Larry came home, Uncle Howard tried to coach him to say the right thing, but he said he didn't see the car coming and dodged in front of it to get to the kids across the road. Uncle Howard tried to make him see that wasn't the way it happened, but Larry wouldn't change his story. In spite of that setback, Mom wouldn't give up and continued to insist I was going to have my lessons.

I was in awe of Miss Webster's grand piano. She lived in a fine house just before you got to the drugstore, as you went down from the high school. The first day I hardly dared touch her Steinway, but immediately fell in love with the tone as soon as one of my fingers struck a key. Until Miss Webster explained to me, I knew nothing about scales and arpeggios, and nothing about correct hand position. I could play only one or two hymns rather stiffly, but she seemed satisfied she could make something of me. When I mentioned I didn't have much money to buy music, she said, "We can take care of that easily." She fetched a thick magazine from a stack in a music rack beside the piano.

"This is the ETUDE. It prints classics and the best new music by modern composers. I lend copies to students who will take good care not to damage them and will return them. I'm sure you will take good care of what I lend you."

She introduced me to a Mozart minuet. I thought I was in heaven. Finger exercises delighted me. I worked hours at Hand Position. I considered ETUDE a treasure whether I was studying one of the modern composers or one of the classics. By the time I was getting ready for our May recital I was working on Beethoven's famous "Minuet in G." Mom wasn't able to come from the Farms, but the other students' mothers were there. The others were far ahead of me, but when I heard them, I agreed with Miss Webster that some of them didn't play musically.

I memorized my piece, and negotiated it commendably, holding my breath that I would both remember the repetition and remember to play it -- as Miss Webster cautioned -- "with enough variation so your audience won't be bored." I really believed it when the mothers congratulated me on how well I played. I swelled with pleasure, and Miss Webster seemed pleased. However, I somewhat spoil my success because of ignorance. In the triumph of achievement, I got up courage to tell Miss Webster, "I hope now I will be able to play the real piece."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean now I will be able to play the grown-up piece not the one written over for children."

"But this is the real one."

I hoped nobody noticed how I flushed with embarrassment.

Juliana Alexander was the most accomplished player. She was in my class -- a tall, friendly, somewhat awkward girl. She approached with her mother who complimented me and called me a "prodigy." She said she had been looking forward so much to meeting the remarkable president of Juliana's class. A big busted woman of great presence, she explained that Juliana was born the same day as Princess Juliana of the Netherlands and was named for her. Mrs. Alexander had an air of superiority, implying that the praise I got was deserved because she said so.

-O-

Mel was much more of an athlete than I. He was pitcher and third baseman on our ball team, and also a key member of our basketball team that practiced and held games in the gym of the Northfield Seminary for Girls. I went out for baseball but without getting much chance to play. Basketball was altogether too fast moving for me. I never did have any comprehension of it the way Mel did, almost by instinct.

He had a girl lived over in West Northfield across the river in a little house on the right just before you reach the Vernon/ Vermont line. Georgia was one of those girls completely woman. You had the feeling that she was sort of a big mother to anybody with pants on. She was made for love and marriage. Once a month or so, Mel rode home with her on the West Northfield bus and stayed overnight and came back to school with her next morning.

In my sophomore year, her sister Mildred was a freshman, and I soon realized I was supposed to follow Mel's example and be welcomed into the family. When I got my first note from her, passed from aisle to aisle to my desk, I answered it because I didn't know what else to do. I got emotional and embarrassed without having the great desire to be with her that Mel had to be with Georgia.

Teachers and Daddy Baxter, our janitor -- who sometimes patrolled the aisles -- seemed totally blind to notes that were passed back and forth between a boy and a girl. I knew I didn't want to take the West Northfield bus to stay over night at the Howells's. It seems wrong of me not to but I didn't. My hands sweat when one of those folded slips of paper appeared on my desk, but I made a point of answering her "What are you doing?" or "Do you like English?" as if there was a right answer I was supposed to know. I would always tell the truth and wonder if it was right. I was not indifferent. I had a feeling my future depends on keeping notes moving back and forth, but I felt there was something important missing. I liked the idea of writing to Mildred, but there was a kind of undercurrent and language that, no matter how I tried, I couldn't make a go of. I never suggested we meet after school, or if the sophomores passing to class passed her freshman class, I kept my eyes straight ahead.

One day I got a note "Are you going to the basketball game Friday? I am." As a matter of fact, I always went to the games riding with Mel who always played. There seemed always somebody's father driving up to the Seminary to

carry us back and forth. I sat up in the gallery above the gym floor and the oblong running track underneath the gallery. Practice nights, the building was reserved for us. None of the Seminary girls were ever there, only the night watchman who let us in and locked up when we left.

That Friday after getting the note from Mildred, when I climbed the stairs to the gallery, I could see Georgia and Mildred with some other girls in the center bleachers upstairs. I made a point of sitting by myself over opposite, keeping my eyes fixed on the floor where the teams were rushing and shouting and banging the ball at each other. From the corner of my eyes I could see Georgia and Mildred, and know when they are looking across, but I never met their gaze. I sat there the whole evening, my eyes turned down to the action on the floor. I had no idea how the game was going. It moved too fast for me anyway. I never left my seat to go over, and they never come over to me. I was not even rooting for Northfield. I sat wrapped up in my inability to get up and walk around the gallery to the other side. I just couldn't.

The next morning a note from Mildred didn't mention the game. We might as well neither of us have been there. I sent back my answer. We kept it up until Mel stopped going over on the bus. Georgia left school to get married to a worker for CV Railroad. One day she came to school. At noon hour she came over to me and in her gravelly, caressing voice, told me she got married. She said she hoped it wouldn't make any difference between Mildred and me. She said she hoped we would keep on just the same as if she was still in school. She was very concerned for us. I liked her so much. It was right about that time Mildred and I stopped passing notes. Through it all Mom seemed to know what was going on, but she never mentioned it in so many words.

-O-

My freshman and sophomore years, in spring, Miss MacDonald assigned every student in school to write a short story. It had become a yearly feature in her school. After all the stories were in, she and the other two teachers took turns reading them to the whole home room. I remember the title and theme of my freshman story, "The Green Monkey's Secret." The Green Monkey was an inn in a watering place somewhere in an exotic abstract corner of the Pacific. There was a shack where transient travelers could stay over night. There was a Green Monkey behind the check-in desk, but the secret had to do with a

mysterious disappearance of guest after guest after guest. Modeled after Somerset Maugham for Malaysian exoticism and Poe for gruesome details, it was, I thought, a classic, but didn't win the prize.

Next year I tried realism with a baseball game, the one sport all us boys know. A last inning clear-the-bases home run by my hero elicited the only comment from Miss MacDonald who remarked dryly as the opposing team pitcher wound up for his famous speedball, "The author calls it the 'pitcher's mound' but I thought it was a 'box.'"

I was not sure whether she had some inside information about baseball or whether she meant to compliment me on increasing her vocabulary but my ears got red, as if everybody in the room was looking at me, which is doubtful for the reading was always anonymous. Again, I didn't win the prize, or even honorable mention. First prize went to John Howard, the son of a former superintendent of schools already accepted for Princeton. I wondered if it was my 'mistake' over "pitcher's mound" that downgraded my entry, but if so, I didn't have nerve to tell Miss Macdonald she was wrong.

Later in the spring the first poem I ever wrote was printed in the school ANNUAL. It was written about Betty Cota.

Before she got a boyish bob
she used to wear a hat
but now she has her hair cut
she wants us to see that;

It's cut off short in front
and shingled down behind
and for some movie company
she thinks she'd be a find.

Mom thought it was "pretty good."

-O-

In April they had a statewide achievement test in Latin. When the results came, Miss MacDonald announced that one of the sophomores got a score on the senior grade level. She was looking at me, but never gave me my score.

At the very last assembly Miss MacDonald announced she would be leaving Northfield to go teach in Dalton, Massachusetts, near Pittsfield. I felt betrayed. She was the best high school teacher I ever have.

Chapter Eight

1926, summerHomelife, Nfld. Farms

In order to get on the ferry from the Northfield Farms shore, you blew the horn hanging from a tree branch, and the ferryman over in Gill came from his shack and cranked a cable to draw the flat skiff across the river. Once in a long spell Mom rode over with Lucy Ross to market Lucy's butter and eggs in Turners Falls. It was a lot nearer than going by road the long way of the triangle from the Farms to Millers Falls and then over to Turners.

Mom almost never went out. The ladies of the Farms Fortnightly Club tried to get her to come to their meetings at the free library just up the road from the school. Almost every time she would plan to she came down with a sick headache and didn't go. Once in a great while, Mrs. Luey sent a note that she would like to take Mom for a ride in her auto with her chauffeur riding in front, and Mom got dressed up and went, but she always worried over her clothes and what the two of them could possibly have to say to each other.

She got to know Lucy from sending the washing and ironing to her on the few times Mom could afford to be sick abed. When Larry was born was one of those times. Dr. Newton told Pop it was all right if we older boys came into the bedroom to see the baby. He gave us make-believe pink pills. Melvin was ten, I was eight, and Clayt six, all trooping in around the bed to look at Mom with the baby. There was talk about how to spell his name for the birth certificate. Pop

looked at Mom, who settled the matter, saying in her tired, proud voice, "It's going to be LAWRENCE with a W." She didn't tell us where ALTON came from.

Pop was whispering to Dr. Newton, who called Melvin over and hiked up his nightgown and looked at him, and then did the same to me and Clayt.

He said, "They're all all right. I wouldn't touch them. Foreskin never hurt anybody, man or boy."

Mom liked Lucy Ross because she was ordinary. Lucy would stop by the house and Mom climb aboard, and Lucy would drive down to head the horse and buggy onto the ferry and unload on the Gill side and drive to Turners the short way. They carried their lunch but usually had a banana split after Lucy finished bargaining.

Lucy worked for Mrs. Durkee who lived in the big house stretching across the hilltop where the riverroad followed the river in its big bend before straightening out to join after a couple of miles the Millers River flowing in from Irving and Orange and Athol to the east.

When I got along to be junior in high school, Mrs. Ross got me the job of mowing lawn for Mrs. Durkee. I climbed the curved driveway to that long house looking down as if the house could see me coming. I got a good combing over from Miz Durkee, a little, no-nonsense woman in a big chair in front of a great window looking up river. She had a pair of binoculars on the table beside her chair. She wanted to know if I knew enough to clip around the edges, and keep the machine oiled.

She said, "Lucy, I want you to watch him. I want it done right. Be sure he mows the path over to Mr. Durkee's gravestone, and mows that patch, and clips around the gravestone, too." ...And probably because she had seen through her binoculars how Shep, the Wilson Collie, followed me as far as the turn-off at the foot of the hill: "He mustn't bring that dog into my dooryard. You hear me, boy? I won't have that dog messing my lawn."

I had to mow every week. Shep would be waiting for me in his dooryard. We would be horsing it on the path that ran along the top of the sandbank drumlin between the road and the river, but after the first day, I wouldn't let Shep come any farther as soon as I could see the big house over on the opposite hill. I knew he would wait for me. I took care to oil the bearings before I started mowing and after I finished. I thought she was probably watching. I mowed

careful to get the wheels to overlap so there wasn't a fringe of grass left between one row and the next. I clipped around the posts of the clothesline, and along the edge of the barn, as well as between the lawn and the base of the clapboards the length of the house. I took particular care with the base of Mr. Durkee's gravestone. There was a bowl of fresh flowers put there every day. The last thing, I raked the whole lawn because Miz Durkee didn't want grass tracked into her kitchen.

Lucy would take me in to the big room when I knocked to pick up my thirty-five cents. There were full-length tall mirrors, a half a dozen on the walls. I was glad to take my money and leave. I began to feel free as I walked down the curving drive to the road. With her watching, I never took a short cut through sidehill meadow grass. Shep would be waiting for me, and we climbed the path to the top of the sandhill. I felt free when I could turn around and look back and not see the house.

All the way through high school and as long as I stayed home, I kept on mowing lawn for Mrs. Durkee. I began to hear things about her. All those full-length mirrors in the drawing room were brought from some house in Boston, where Mr. Durkee was in business. It was said she worked in the house until he married her and built the great place in Northfield Farms for her. When he got old, he closed down his business and came to live in the house looking out over the river. He died there.

She never went anywhere, never had company. It was as if she never knew anybody but her husband, and, later, Mrs. Ross when she needed a housekeeper. There was something strange and forbidden.

Shep continued to be waiting for me. When I went to work, he fell in behind me, and we turned off from the road onto the path to the top of the long sandbank following the course of the river. Shep followed till the path turned down to the road below the house. He waited in a shady spot by the turn in the river.

One Saturday when I finished mowing and got my pay and ran down the long driveway to crawl under the fence up from the river side, there were a couple black horses, a filly and a stallion, chawinking grass at the edge of a bare spot under a huge willow just up bank from the river. Shep joined me and I went down to throw pebbles into the water, then I came back and felt the flanks of the

horses, and picked them some tall asters to feed them. The stallion stretched out his hind legs, let down his pecker and made water, sending up a spout of steam mixed with dust. I knelt down and watched as he shivered his pecker and gently knocked it back and forth, enjoying it. I squatted down on my haunches and looked up marveling at how long it was. I reached out and touched its tip and he shivered his haunches. Gradually it started shrinking and withdrawing until it was taken back inside the pouch. I wondered what it felt like to put down a pecker like that and feel it swaying. I climbed up into the low branches of the willow, and lured the filly to come over and nibble at some asters. While she munched, I carefully let myself down astraddle her back. She didn't seem to mind. She didn't buck to throw me off or streak away with me on her holding on for dear life, she just stood in her tracks. Finally I slid down. Then I thought of Mrs. Durkee up there in the house, and squinted between the branches up at her window and wondered how much she had seen through binoculars. Had she been watching? I walked matter-of-factly over into a patch of sunlight out in the open, and lay down, lounging against the sandbank, crossing my knees, pretending to be napping.

Shep was whining. He soon curled up at my feet. After a little while, I got up, yawned and stretched, and with Shep behind me, walked carelessly out into the open and onto the path up the drumlin. We ambled slowly until we were out of sight from the house, then I ran like the dickens, with Shep barking beside me all the way along the path at the top, until we plunged in a rush down to the road and on to his house where I told him he couldn't come any farther.

Chapter Nine

Fall, 1926

Junior in H.S., aged 15

When we got on the bus at Woods's store, everybody was talking about our new principal. We all knew his name, Alanson E. Skillings. None of us has seen him. It was the first time we any of us had a man teacher. Everybody was

jabbering. What was he like? We piled out of the bus at the high school and hurried inside and upstairs. The teachers were bunched in a corner talking to this small man in a tan suit. We milled around because we didn't have our new seating plan. I was moving up from my sophomore seat to the junior section. I turned around to look to the front of the room. He was wearing glasses. Not much taller than I, he was heavier but not fat. He was talking to Miss Lawley. When the bell rang, he sat in back of the desk and Miss Lawley came forward. She was holding a piece of paper and read off the new seat assignments beginning with the seniors over next to the north windows. My seat was the seventh row in from those windows, three quarter way back. The room was quieter than usual on organization day because we were all studying the new principal. He was looking us over. He didn't seem in a hurry to get out of his chair, but as if he was just a visitor studying how it went here in Northfield.

When the last freshman was assigned to the front seat in the last row by the blackboards along the south wall, Miss Lawley looked at him and he nodded, and she said, "And now it is my pleasure to introduce your new principal, Mr. Alanson E. Skillings."

He came out around the desk slowly and stood looking us over.

"Thank you, Miss Lawley."

Then he said very directly to all of us, "Welcome back to school. And a special welcome to the freshmen. Like you, I am a beginner. We will learn together."

He raised his voice, "And together we can make Northfield High School the greatest little high school in the United States."

He said this solemnly as if he was thinking it out for the first time.

"I want each and every one of you to remind yourself every day that the free public school in America is the greatest educational opportunity the world has ever known."

I don't suppose any of us had thought of this before, I know I hadn't. He went on to tell us that he accepted this appointment only after persuading the schoolboard that he could have the assistance of Miss Lawley to take on the duties of Assistant Principal.

"She will keep records and preside over our assemblies, and in general keep us on track. Miss Lawley will continue to teach math and science and has

agreed to take over the Latin classes at least for this year. Miss Jones will continue teaching English and French and the once-a-week class in Home Economics. I will teach History on all four levels, so you will all get acquainted with me immediately. My course will be Principles of Democracy because in America the most important part of our education should be a grasp of our history and a knowledge of our opportunities and responsibilities as citizens. I will also coach two three-act plays one for fall and one for spring. Anybody wishing to try out for the fall play is welcome to come for auditions a week from tomorrow right after school. I want also to tell you young men that I insisted that the schoolboard allow time in my schedule for coaching baseball. We may not have enough students or enough weight to play football and we have no gymnasium for basketball, but we do have a regulation diamond, and I intend to get in touch with neighboring high schools and see if we can form a league with a trophy for the winning team. And I intend to help you men make sure that Northfield will be the winner of that trophy."

This was something absolutely new for Northfield. I exchanged glances with Stanley Bistrek, the best athlete in our class.

Our opening assembly ended with Juliana Alexander accompanying us on the piano while Miss Jones led us in a new song, "Northfield! Oh, Northfield!" that she got from Mr. Skillings. I could tell that most of the students felt as I did that this was the best assembly we ever had at Northfield High School. The United States was the greatest country in the world, and Northfield High could be "the greatest little high school in the United States" and maybe in the whole world.

-O-

On a fall day Stanley Bistrek passed by my desk whispering without looking at me, "Follow me downstairs after a minute."

I had no idea why he wanted me to come to the basement but the excitement in his voice was contagious. He was no student, and we hadn't much of anything in common except our interest in baseball. Something about the way he swaggered past Mr. Skillings' desk made me wish it could be sex on his mind, but I hardly believed it. When I got down to the boys' toilet, he was standing there at the urinal taking a leak with one hand and holding out toward me a new baseball bat in the other.

"Whadya think of that? Isn't it a dandy?"

He shoved it into my hands, and I had to agree it was smooth, polished and well hung, a masterpiece of baseball bat craft. In fact, I quickly caught Stanley's enthusiasm.

"Mr. Skillings bought it for us."

Stanley took it back and hefted it and swung it to show it off. In the narrow space between the urinals and the cabinets he managed to demonstrate the potential of the wonderful gift. I had a prick of curiosity why Mr. Skillings -- who was sitting at his desk and must have seen us -- let us break the rule about two boys not being allowed downstairs at the same time without permission -- but there was no sign of either Mr. Skillings or Daddy Baxter, the janitor, coming to check on us, and Stanley seemed as unworried as if Mr. Skillings gave us special permission.

I knew baseball and could tell a good bat when I saw one but I never thought of myself as a player. Down at the Farms, where Pop and Charlie Shearer always had a ball team practicing I was too much a runt and had too little of an arm to be in demand. Saturday afternoon practice, I was one of the last chosen for the fictional visiting team. If we lined up a game with Millers or Turners Falls or Hinsdale I usually sat with Pop and Mom until Pop was called to umpire. Then I took over his score book, where you had a printed form for recording every batter up, every called strike or ball, every fly ball, foul ball, every grounder, every runner on base, caught fly or fielded grounder and whether fielded by pitcher or third baseman, shortstop, second or first baseman or outfielder, every runner caught stealing second or third or home, every put-out or assist, every error, base on balls, base hit, two-base hit, three-bagger, or home run, in fact every conceivable play by the home or visiting team could be recorded with a stroke of the pencil on that economically-efficient score card. You had to know the game, and have a keen ear for the umpire, and a keen eye, and keep it peeled on the ball, and I was good at it.

Mr. Skillings taught me to bunt. He had a special method that nobody else on our team took to because everybody else wanted a more ambitious role than becoming a bunter, but I was eager to excel in even that minuscule aspect of the game. Pop had been semi-professional, and Melvin had been a natural, but he graduated last year, too soon to profit from Mr. Skillings' coaching. Clayton was too young to be in high school. If I played, it was usually at short until the visiting

team realized that was where to direct a well-placed hit. Then I'd be put out in right field until we got in a bind, when I'd be benched.

Mr. Skillings trained me for pinch hitter. According to him you ought to bunt a lot oftener than most teams do -- if your team had a runner on base, and you wanted to advance him, for example. Usually a bunter was a sacrifice hitter. Chances were slim of a bunter reaching first, so you didn't use a bunt if you already had two outs unless, perhaps, you had a fast runner on third and no runner on second, when you might be able to place the bunt either between first and second, or towards third base enough to draw off the third baseman. A fast runner could sometimes get enough of a start to make it home before the ball could be fielded to first. There were a lot of possibilities, but usually the coach would decide the main strategy and give the signal whether or not to bunt. You never bunted if the bases were loaded.

Mr. Skillings let me try the new bat, and stood close behind me reaching under my shoulder and showed me the proper way to bunt. You gripped the bat firmly with your left hand at the narrow end just in front of the small circular flange. You held the bat on a level ready to shift it left or right or rotate it away from you so the ball would be tipped down, not pop up in an easy fly for the pitcher. If you were a right-hand batter, as I was, you moved your right palm out away from you toward the bulge and let the bat cradle there loosely between the palm and your curved fingers. Controlled by the left hand gripping the narrow end, you must be prepared to turn the bat under while you step nearly in front of the plate, keeping your eye on the ball and twisting the bat in a whirling-down motion toward the pitcher, so when you connected with the ball, it would be pitched to the ground and not roll fast or far. Most important was to keep your eye on the ball, and turn the bat to send the ball toward first base or third base or between one or the other base and the pitcher, depending on where you thought you had the best chance, or where the base runner was. If he was on first, and first and second basemen were guarding their bases, you might be able to pull the pitcher that way where it would be awkward for him to field the ball to second. A runner on third could sometimes scoot past the pitcher pulled in that direction. If you could make a dead drop to the ground you could sometimes get the pitcher off guard because the ball made a dead fall, hardly rolling at all. All this was

partly "Use your own judgment." You had to be confident enough to stay cool and not lose your head.

Mr. Skillings gave me a lot of support. He said, "Always remember, I am right in back of you supporting you." And it was true, he was standing right there in back of me reaching around me to guide me through the first trials. He tightened my grip on the shaft and moved my right hand a little farther along and said, "Don't grip it with your right, just let it rest loosely, and don't tighten your fingers, just cradle it there at the bulge."

It began to feel natural. He called to Richard Tyler who was on the pitcher's mound sending some trial pitches to Aaron Newton catching behind the plate, and walked along over with me with his arms still around me helping hold the bat.

"Send over a few slow ones and give Lyle a chance to feel them out."

He stood right there with me, and I got my eye on the ball and laid one or two pitches down between the pitcher and third base. Then he stepped back and Dick threw his fast ball, and I missed the first one but connected with the second.

Mr. Skillings said, "That's the ticket. You've got the makings of a bunter. Don't be afraid to step up to the plate. Keep your eye on the ball. Don't be scared it will hit you. Most of our players don't care to take the risk of stepping out where they might catch a fast ball in the groin. It takes a kind of nervy grit to be successful, but you can do it. The ball isn't going to hit you if you keep your eye on it and connect with it before it gets to you."

I took every chance I got to practice. I brought one of our bats from home and had it handy to take advantage of every practice and Mr. Skillings was always encouraging me. I lost my fear of the ball, and got good at placing it where I wanted to. Trouble is, I never got into a game. I was too runty and I didn't have arm enough to make the team.

-O-

Mr. Skillings was as good as his word other ways, too. He had tryouts for the fall play, and I tried out and got a minor part as the father of the hero, but Steve Maynard got the main part because he was tall and handsome and looked the part. Towards the end when we were having evening rehearsals, Mr. Skillings got to bringing Steve and me home, dropping me off then going on with Steve. After we put on the play, he began coming down to pick us up to go on hikes

weekends. We walked out to the great birch in East Northfield or picked up three or four kids on main street and drove out to Warwick to climb up to the fire tower on Mount Grace, where on a clear day you could look out over mountains and hills south and west all the way to Mount Greylock in Williamstown, the highest peak in Massachusetts.

Although Mr. Skillings always stopped at my house to pick me up for these excursions, he never really paid any attention to me. We went down to get Steve, and then stopped for two or three other boys and girls somewhere along the way. Steve always sat in front with him, and what made me jealous was that the two of them would be horsing around and giggling and poking each other, and I might just as well be a clothes horse. On the way back home from Northfield, if we had gone there to pick up other kids and had dropped them off, I would be in the back seat alone, and Steve in front, and sometimes he became pretty suggestive.

Like once I heard him ask Mr. Skillings, "Why is a man like a chocolate bar?"

Without trying for an answer, Mr. Skillings said, "I give up. Why?"

Steve said, "Because if you rub him the right way, out comes a Milky Way."

Mr. Skillings reached over and gave Steve a nudge, and roared with laughter.

Steve got the male lead in the spring play, too, and I got only a small part as a grandfather with false whiskers and pretending to spit tobacco juice, altogether disgusting.

-O-

Steve didn't even pretend to play baseball, and I might as well not so far as having an opportunity to try out my bunting skill in a game. Mr. Skillings had been as good as his word. He got in touch with the principals of Hinsdale High School and Winchester farther up the Ashuelot River in New Hampshire, and they set up a league. The schoolboards in the three schools bought ten gold baseballs for a trophy and put them on display in a glass case in our high school when it was our turn to have them. There had been a lot of close games and a lot of school spirit in all three schools.

At the end of the season, Winchester had been eliminated, Northfield and Hinsdale were tied. Hinsdale came down to Northfield. The game was so important we were playing on the pro field on the grounds of East Northfield Hotel. For some reason, Stanley Bistrek, our captain, has put me in at short for our starting lineup. Then after our warm-up he took away my confidence by coming over and telling me that Hinsdale had picked short as our weak spot.

"They're all saying, 'Put it through short!' Lyle, you've got to under-arm it. If you throw it overhand they'll get to first every time!"

Everybody knew I never had any under arm. What little confidence I had evaporated. As visitors, Hinsdale batted first, and the first hit went between my legs into left field for a two bagger. The second batter hit another grounder straight at me, and I fielded it but so slow the first runner advanced to third and the other was safe at first. Stanley pulled me from the game. I was glad to be pulled and went over to our bleachers and watched from there. The game was pretty well balanced, Hinsdale ahead for a while, then we were, then Hinsdale again, and so on. It was exciting to watch.

In the ninth inning, the score was tied, six to six, Northfield at bat with two outs, and Stanley running at third. I was happy to be well out of it, in the heat of the game anonymous and inconspicuous. Mr. Skillings came over and asked me if I thought I could manage a bunt. I said I would try and he put me in as pinch hitter. I was cool as a cucumber. I remembered everything I'm supposed to, and maybe profited from the pitcher's remembering I was the hasbeen pulled in the first inning. He put a fast ball at waist level right where I wanted it, and I stepped in front of it and tipped it toward third with a gentle twist that should drop it down quick and not roll very far. In the shouting as I was off toward first I knew Stanley was well on his way toward home. I couldn't be sure, but I thought he made it home before I made it to first. They put in a runner for me. We didn't need another run. The game was called. When gold baseballs were handed out in assembly I got one. I asked Stanley how on earth had I earned a gold baseball, and he said, "Who brought in the winning run?"

-O-

I enjoyed my two years of high school French but dropped it at the beginning of senior year. It had something to do with my teacher, whom I liked tremendously until one day towards the end of junior year she rode on the

schoolbus with us to Northfield Farms to look at that part of town. On the busride she rode in back with us students instead of taking Ed Tenney's invitation to ride up front in the cab.

We all leaned to catch her words as the bus bumped along. Traveling over the uneven dirt road, we sometimes had to grab hold of the edge of the bench to keep from being thrown off, but we didn't want to miss a word she said.

"I rode down here once with Miss Lawley. ...In her little Austin... We wanted to see how this end of town is different from the village. ...I live in Billerica, a suburb of Boston... Where you live is so different. ...You people are farmers... It's so open along here."

She was not more than a half dozen years older than we. She wore stylish, citified clothes. The girls adored her, and the boys had a crush on her. She was friendly with us all. I secretly felt I was her favorite. I worked hard at learning the language, practicing vocabulary and trying out the idioms that she said were the real beauty of French. The grammar gave me less trouble than most students because I was good at Latin that most of them didn't take.

On the bus she got us to saying some sentences.

"Est-ce-que vous aimez le francais?"

"Oui, mademoiselle, j'aime le francais."

She got us giggling, particularly Warren Billings and Esther Tenney, who weren't taking French. I showed off a little by repeating, "J'aime bien le francais, Mademoiselle." She beamed at me. I loved the lilt and swing of the language. I swelled with importance, imagining we had a special bond.

We got off the bus at Woods's store. Charlotte Shearer and Esther Tenney and Catherine Scoble, all of whom lived in the Meadow, get off too to walk along with us. We were somewhat flirtatious on both sides, a favorite teacher with some of her favorite students. As we came to Ralph Lynch's big house, she admired it. "Admirable!" her word for it. She got us all to pronounce it with only three syllables and an accent on the third. Farther on she was curious about the turnoff to the Central Vermont station, with its low roof hanging out over the dark windows of the single story. "Drole," she said, rolling her eyes. "La maison est drole." And after we mastered that, "La petite maison est drole." Miss Jones took a couple steps into Frank Howe's yard to get a better view. "La maison c'est drole, n'est-ce-pas?"

We crossed the bridge over the culvert and started upgrade toward our house. Automatically, I lifted my eyes and could see Mom's face at the north kitchen window. She was always waiting there at the jog where the kitchen joined the entry to the barn on the north side of the house. She would be watching to see her boys come home, so short she would be looking under not over the crosspiece separating top sash from lower sash.

Miss Jones was looking also -- and curiously.

"Cette maison-la, c'est triste, n'est-ce-pas?"

Everybody was looking at her, then up at the house with its paint peeling off clapboards. She added, "Je me demande qui demeure dans quelle maison!"

Her intonation conveyed more than her words. It seemed to be something she had thought about, as if she carried it back to Northfield after her first walk here with Miss Lawley.

I was floundering. -- The grassless dooryard worn by traffic of thousands of passages of running feet, the curtainless windows, the face of Mom peering out. The burden of our miserable poverty suddenly descended on me as seen through her eyes. We arrived at the flimsy railing, somewhat askew, leading up broken steps to the path to the kitchen door.

A hush fell over our little band. I cleared my throat and turned up the steps.

"This is where I live."

Chapter Ten

July, 1927

Theatricals, Nfld. Farms

Lewis Woods came back after a year at Northeastern, where he learned to make a crystal set for us to listen in on radio. It seemed a miracle to hear the crackle of static being interrupted by an intelligible human voice. Politics became not only something for Town Meeting and THE BOSTON GLOBE, it was possible to listen in on people talking in New York or Washington and all over the place; you could even hear music.

Lewis had musical talent and dramatic skill, his first production for the stage in our upstairs hall and schoolroom being a Minstrel Show, where he put together patter and a collection of old time plantation classics and persuaded us older kids to perform. We liked darkies even though we had never seen one and presumed that since the Civil War slavery had been outlawed, to the credit of Abraham Lincoln and American Democracy. Although we felt superior to darkies we read about in UNCLE TOM'S CABIN and HUCKLEBERRY FINN, we loved them and supposed that was enough.

There were no girls in our production. We boys learned to play the bones, Pop making a pair each for Clayt and me from basswood, and Lewis knew a drummer and a fiddler glad to come from Northfield to rehearsals. We had enough old clothes of our own, and black face was fun. Until the night of the performance, I was as stiff and formal as a manikin in a store photograph, but

something about being up there in front of an audience triggered a kind of jigging dance across the front of the stage, and a bowing and scraping that seems right for my song.

Gramp and Gram came from Moores Corner for our performance, and afterwards Gramp said, "Bunny was the only one who really got down to singing with any spice to it."

Our second play was an oriental drama with Warren Billings dressed up as Zuleika, the heroine, Lewis playing the part of Pasha in baggy trousers who rescued her from an evil genie who smoked opium through a hookah, and brandished a sickle (actually a corn knife); I was the genie. The Turkish crescent slipped out of my hand the night we took the production to Montague, and flew over the footlights and skittered across the floor under the skirts of a lady in the front row. I was rather proud of the shrieking till the lady yelled out to me that I could have sliced off her leg.

So we didn't have to pay royalties Lewis improvised changes in our score, also claiming that our profits were eaten up with rent for the hall and costumes and incidentals. We always played to a full house. In Montague, Pop's boyhood chums from old days in North Leverett egged him on at intermission until he got up on the stage and sang

There is no place like home
but I'm afraid to go home in the dark,
every day the papers say
there are robbers out in the park,
so I sit alone in the Y M C A
singing just like a lark,
There is no place like home
but I'm afraid to go home in the dark.

Between acts I went down from the stage to sit with Mom, and she whispered, "I wish your father wouldn't get up there and make a fool of himself," but when he finished the song, she clapped just like everybody else did. He had a high tenor voice and sang real good, with a little sideways grin at Uncle Maurice and Uncle Perry and Glawn Watson who had wheedled him up there. I could see he was really enjoying showing off in public just the way I did. He sang

a couple of other vaudeville numbers that were all right, but Maurice and Perry and Glawn fired him up to sing "When Mollie spreads her knees..."

Once he got started he couldn't seem to hold back and sang the whole of it:

...her crotch is full of cheese,
she ducks her chin
and tucks it in
as easy as you please.

Even though Pop coughed and scrambled out the word "crotch," you caught what the word was. Mom was ashamed of him, and said to me, "What will Bertha Lynch think?"

As a matter of fact, Bertha, a former second-string opera singer from Boston, was the one who hollered, "Bravo! Encore!"

-O-

There was more to my relationship to the Collie who was waiting for me when I went over to Mrs. Durkee's.

He was probably the same Collie that humped me that time on the baseball diamond down in Frank Howe's pasture. I said he belonged to Peter Bartus, but Peter never had a dog. Shep turned out to belong to a family that lived just south of the Lueys' new house on the river road. He often came up to my house looking for me, and if it was Saturday afternoon, we legged it across the fields and up the mountain where the shanties used to be, and beyond. We ran through the woods until we found an open place in the sun where I could stretch out and pretend to be napping, when he would explore for my hands in my pockets and nudge me until he had freed one of my hands, then he would hump me, getting more and more excited, and barking. He got right down to business and worked his slippery pecker into my hand till he was going it at great rate. He slobbered my face with his tongue. I tightened my fingers where I was holding him down at the base of his pecker and a hard ball came up and swelled till it was as big as a goodsized horse chestnut. The harder I grabbed hold, the harder he pumped till he shot all over the place. If it was a really warm day, I would take off my clothes and he'd lap me and whine. It felt really good. After I put my clothes back on we would run as a team through the woods.

-O-

Another thing about the minstrel show: after one rehearsal Kenneth Lynch told me. "Did you get a look at Marshall Hammond? He had a real bone on."

I thought he was talking about the pairs of wooden bones our fathers helped us make to click/clack when we sang, but Kenneth went on, "It was sticking right up pushing his overalls."

I didn't know how to make an approach to somebody like Marshall, who lived about a mile up the road, a half mile beyond the schoolhouse in a great old broken down tavern that Mrs. Hammond was proud of because it had been in the family a couple of hundred years. Once when I went past there on a Sunday after Sunday School, Marshall happened to be in the yard, and we went up into their sheep pasture and after a while began to wrastle, and wrastled around for an hour or more, trying to get at each other's pecker, but squirming as hard as we could to keep from being touched. All we had to do really was lie still and be grabbed, but that was not how you did it. You pretended life and death to be protecting your virtue (or something): you scrambled like all get out, he after you, and you after him, both wanting to be grabbed almost as much as you wanted to grab the other, but we didn't know how to achieve it. After an hour or so we gave up because I had to go home for Sunday noon dinner.

The closest I ever came to having Marshall was a couple of months after the minstrel show, when Lewis Woods as a certified Boy Scout Master was teaching us merit badges. He organized an overnight camper out at Locks Pond about a dozen miles from the Farms and two miles up the road from Moores Corner center. Kenneth Lynch and I decided to earn a hiking merit badge by walking all the way from Northfield Farms. We thought it was about the right distance. It was a hot summer day, and when we came to Bournes' store, Kenneth had money to buy a ginger ale, but it was lukewarm when he gave me a swig. I spit it out and was glad I didn't have a nickel to waste.

For me the worst that happened at the campout was after supper when we built our campfire, and had a free hour before lighting it. We all played hide and seek, and I was IT and couldn't find Stanley Scoble and it got so late I had to gobble him in free. I pretended to be mad and called him a bastard, and Lewis heard me and gave me a one point demerit. I had never heard of such a thing and asked him why, and Lewis said I used a swear word.

I said, "I didn't!" and Lewis said I called Stanley a bastard.

"What's wrong with bastard?"

"Nothing if you want to use a swear word. Boy Scouts don't."

I said again, "What's wrong with bastard?" because I really wanted to know, and besides I was mad to have got a demerit. Lewis said, "There you go again!" and gave me a second demerit.

It was only later that I learned from Melvin that bastard meant somebody's mother had you by somebody who was not your father.

After campfire, Kenneth slept by himself because he brought his sleeping bag he carried all the way from Northfield Farms. So I slept with Marshall under both our blankets. We were all of us singing and jawing while Marshall and I were secretly reaching over each other but pushing the other's hand away. Finally we all settled down, even Marshall and I giving up. When we all had time to be nearly asleep, Marshall histed up on one elbow, and, speaking loud enough to get everybody's attention, told the most no-joke joke I ever heard. There was nothing funny to it, and no point to it. He got the raspberry so I was sorry for him and pretended it was funny and managed a laugh, no sooner getting out the snicker than he scrunched down under the covers, and I realized he told the joke to find out if I was asleep. He had been waiting till it was safe to touch me. I realized then there was no chance of getting anything more out of him and we both settled down under the blankets and fell asleep, and in the morning we all had a swim in the ice cold water, and broke up camp and went home.

-O-

I went through a cross-dressing. One day the Cota girls came over dressed in their mother's old dresses and asked me to dress up and walk around the neighborhood with them knocking on doors. Instead of changing to Pop's old clothes, I changed into Mom's, her handmedowns fitting because I was enough of a runt and she was so tiny her clothes were just the right size. I put on one of her old dresses and one of her hats, and flung a scarf around my neck and thought I looked like a flapper. The Cota girls thought I was wonderful. I minced and pigeontoed and put on an act for Mrs. Cota, who came to their door and threw up her hands; then we went over to our house. Sometimes we even got up courage to go and try to fool Kenneth Lynch's mother. Once we tried to get Mel to dress up, but he wouldn't have anything to do with it. We did it two years in a

row, when I stopped doing it. Nobody ever called me a sissy or made fun of me, but there was something about it that after a couple of years it was no fun.

Chapter Eleven

1927

August

Before Melvin graduated from high school, the last couple years, he worked summers for Mr. Gaines on his Millers Falls milk route. When Melvin left home I inherited the job, quickly learning the routine, getting up at 6:00 to help load the truck, then delivering the bottles to customers, blue caps for last night's milking, red caps for this morning's. Some housekeepers insisted on the very latest milking, others thought the evening milking was better because cows had been out to pasture chomping grass all day instead of spending the night in their stalls chewing cuds waiting for Mr. Gaines's alarm clock to go off to get him up for morning milking by lantern light. I had to be on hand by 6:30 after the truck

was ready to be loaded for the trip to customers in Millers Falls. We followed the same route every day. Mr. Gaines driving the truck, the hired hand Irving Stone - who helped with the milking and loading -- taking one side of the street, I the other. Mostly it was routine unless Mrs. Smackley left a note in an empty bottle asking for an extra quart, or a half pint of cream. We covered the network of streets in a pattern worked out a dozen years ago when Mr. Gaines started his business. Melvin was his helper for three summers, and now I was taking his place.

Irv had a room over the cowshed. His clothes smelled of cowshit and sour milk. He surprised me when he told how Miranda Josephson visited him one night, just walking into the barnyard and asking for a quart of milk for her mother, then lingering and egging him on -- but, he said, "Nothing came of it, because she was wearing the rag. I expect her back any night now."

It was hard to believe the fastidious Miranda's coming over on such an errand.

When we finished the route, Irv rode home in back with the crates of empty bottles, I rode in front with Mr. Gaines. One morning at 11:30 we picked up Peter Gdanski at the edge of town, and he rode on the running board, holding onto the rolled-down windowsill, and I supported him with my left hand around back of his hips, my right hand holding a rolled-up newspaper lying low on the side of the door against which Peter was leaning. I began feel him squirming down there his hips pushed in, and without touching him with my hand, I begin to move the paper between his legs, and feel him pushing in tighter and tighter. I was leaning out the window into the wind and he was leaning in toward me. We didn't say a word or by a flicker of an eyelash give an inkling what we were up to.

When we come alongside his house next after the Josephsons', Mr. Gaines slowed down, and Peter dropped off.

That afternoon I was out on our side lawn beside the ferry road when Peter came along with a towel over his shoulder and asked if I could go down with him to the outlet of Four Mile Brook to swim in the river. Just then Mom came to the door calling us to supper, and after supper I helped with the dishes, already late. I didn't ask if it was all right to go swimming because I thought she would know why I was asking. The next noon when we came home from the Falls, Peter was out with his father and mother and sisters down in the cucumber

patch on hands and knees moving along two rows the whole family together, the womenfolks with handkerchiefs over their heads to ward off the hot sun. At fifteen, he was a big boy still in the seventh grade. In fall and spring he missed a lot of school working in the fields with his family, and though he started school a couple years after I did, when I was a junior in high school, he was still in the eighth grade. I never had a chance to tell him why I didn't come down to the river.

-O-

Mel went up to live with Uncle Howard and Aunt Maud in Keene, New Hampshire, where Uncle Howard found him a job. Mel bought himself a jalopy and Mom worried about her first boy to leave home, but he seemed to be having a good time.

I became the big boy in the family, for the first time sleeping alone in the big front room upstairs looking down on the main road. I continued to do well in school and was active in Lewis Woods' Boy Scout troop, but I really was not seriously working for Eagle Scout. We were having our meetings over at the rear end of a meadow up along Four Mile Brook across from the schoolhouse if the weather was good. If it rained we met in the schoolhouse. This Friday evening right after supper we were working on tying knots, and Lewis was teaching us the difference between a granny knot and a reef or square knot that will hold.

Chet Levshinski was sitting beside me and kept reaching over and trying to rip my fly. I could feel my cock growing under his touch. He gave me a pinch and really grabbed hold of my pecker and stood up and started running towards the trees looking back, and I took off after him, determined to let him get hold of me or I'd get a-hold of him if that was what he was after. We were just at the edge of the woods when there was shouting behind us, and I thought it was Lewis calling us back because he knew what we were up to, but then I saw Mel parked there, getting out of his jalopy. I had to go back. I had been on fire with excitement to fool around with Chet, but now I had to break off.

Mel told me he stopped by the house and got permission from Mom and Pop to take me till Sunday afternoon to Keene, where we would go dancing or roller skating down to Lake Sunapee Saturday night. He already had my clothes in a suitcase. Out of the corner of my eye I could see Chet watching us get ready to leave, but I didn't even lift my hand to wave goodbye.

Keene had the biggest paved street in the world, the whole center square paved over with bricks. Melvin had a couple of girls picked out for us and Saturday after supper we went down to Sunapee, where you could rent roller skates. You helped your girl put on her skates, then you held hands and skated together around the rollerdrome. There was a big crowd, making a terrible racket, falling all over the place, one great rumble from start to finish. It was pretty good fun, and I found I was pretty good at it. The worst of it was afterwards, when Mel and Thelma were spooning in the front seat till after midnight, and Susie and I in the rumble trying to make conversation. I cuddled her but didn't have my heart in it like Mel did. She was a nice enough girl, but it was clear she thought me a dudd, and I was glad enough when we let her out at her house. I still had to sit in the back for an hour behind Mel and Thelma. I finally went to sleep and woke up when we drove into the dooryard and tiptoed upstairs and down the hall to our bedroom, not to wake Aunt Maud and Uncle Howard and Howard, Junior, the baby.

We slept late and Aunt Maud gave us brunch, with little Howard in his highchair, slapping a strip of bacon up and down against the tray, trying to hold our attention. He needed his diapers changed, and Aunt Maud took him away.

Afterward Mel and I were breezing down the main drag toward the center of town when there was a crunch and grinding of brakes, and we ended up on the left side of the street at the curb with our front right fender locked with the front left fender of a new Buick that pulled out of nowhere at the curb just as we came along.

A man from the front passenger seat was yelling, "What on earth are you up to?"

We piled out, Mel and I and the man. The man hurried around the front of the Buick, and motioned the girl to move over into the passenger seat where he had been, and his wife and another middle-aged woman stayed in back.

One of the women was singing out, "You must have been speeding. We barely started from the curb when you collided with us."

We didn't say anything. By now the young girl had moved over to the passenger side and the man was standing there with the door on the driver's side partly open. Mel and I were working on the fenders trying to unlock them. Ours was only a little bit crumpled, and theirs had some paint scraped away, but both

cars were more scratched than seriously damaged. With Mel lifting on the jalopy's fender, and me pushing down on the Buick's, we managed to free the two of them.

The man got in and backed slowly under Mel's direction and pulled his car over into the shade on the right side of the street where it had been before. The three grownups were talking how we must have been speeding.

One of the women said, "You came out of nowhere. We were just sitting here. You spoiled a perfect weekend. We just got back from the Mohawk Trail and lunch at the Sweetheart Teashop in Shelburne Falls, and you hit us out of nowhere."

None of them paid attention how the jalopy's fender was as much damaged as theirs. You would have thought we bashed in the side of their car on purpose, but there was only a little paint peeled up from their left fender. The man gave the impression he was the driver.

Mel and I got back into our car and Mel cramped his wheels and backed around and we went back slowly the way we came, leaving the Buick there across the street at the curb. Wherever Mel was going when we hit them, he had changed his mind. We drove back to the apartment and parked the car at the curb, where we took another look at the fender, and it was hardly dented at all. I told Mel how if he hadn't spun his steering wheel to the left we could have had a serious accident. They were clacking how their perfect weekend had been ruined, when it was them who pulled out in front of us. We went up the back stairs into Mel's room and lay down for a nap. Mel didn't seem to want to discuss the matter.

A half hour later Aunt Maud came into our bedroom and said there was a policeman downstairs wanted to talk to us. We went down without telling her anything. He was out by his squad car and wanted to see Mel's license and registration.

Mel told his story. The cop rubbed his chin. "Well, I tell you. They are pretty wrought up. They say you left the scene of the accident. They won't press charges if you'll pay for repainting their fender. Their story is they just got back from a trip down to Greenfield, Mass., and out over the Mohawk Trail to Shelburne Falls and back. The man did the driving. Under questioning, he admitted that, although the girl doesn't have a valid license but only a learner's

permit, they pulled up to give her a chance to practice from there home, and she was just pulling away from the curb. You'd've been all right if you hadn't left the scene."

He had a paper for Mel to sign and he signed it, agreeing to pay for the damage to the Buick's left front fender and relieving him of further responsibility. He had to get me back to Northfield Farms for school tomorrow and didn't want Aunt Maud and Uncle Howard to know we'd been involved in an accident even though it wasn't our fault.

Chapter Twelve

1927

Late August, I'm 16

My Bible verse to answer rollcall was "Even so as the tongue is a little member and boasteth great things, behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth" (James 3,5). Kenneth Lynch's was "Jesus wept." Mrs. Gilbert said "gurd" when she meant "good." Almost every Sunday she told how lucky we were.

"Don't ever forget you live in Northfield, the Second Bethlehem."

By this she meant we lived in the town where D. L. Moody was born. She took her best students to visit the Birthplace on the grounds of Northfield Seminary for Girls, where they had his desk and the chair he sat in.

He must have had a big bottom because the seat of the chair was as big as a bushel basket. When I sat in it, Mrs. Gilbert said, "Doesn't it make you feel like a big boy to sit in His chair?" But it made me feel small for I had to sit over on one side of the bulge in the middle.

We got a star for reading a book in the Bible. We read all the short books and I won the prize, a new Bible. Mrs. Gilbert wrote in it "From Mrs. C. L. Gilbert and the Sunday School...II Timothy, 2.15." That was one of the short books I read.

I looked forward to the day when I would be in high school and in the advanced class to keep a notebook on the Journeys of Paul, but by the time I got to high school, she never got to offer the course, which Melvin had taken. She started teaching it when she had Bernice Billings and Lewis Woods in her school.

Until the Montagues moved to Northfield, Mrs. Montague and Mrs. Gilbert divided responsibilities. Mrs. Montague had charge of Sunday evening services and Mrs. Gilbert taught Sunday school. Both had been school teachers who married well-to-do farmer heirs of Northfield Farms property. Mr. Montague's father and Mr. Gilbert's father gradually stopped farming and sold off their land in order to live on income. Frank Montague's father was richer but both were rich enough so their sons didn't do day labor.

Charlie Gilbert pieced out his income by running a farm supply depot that sold fertilizer and chickenfeed. He had his Buick for Sundays and a Ford truck for delivering sweet smelling bags of grass seed and corn, and bags with the words "Lay or Bust" spraying all over the front and a picture of a fat Rhode Island Red being blown to smithereens.

Nobody ever saw Frank Montague in work clothes, but Charlie Gilbert wore dressy striped overalls for work. Since the Gilberts lived next door to the Billingses and had no children of their own, they became second parents to the Billings children and took the whole family on Sunday excursions over the Mohawk trail or to Lake Winnepesaukee, and sometimes as far away as Revere Beach.

From the time she was a cute little flirt, Bernice always rode in the middle of the front seat between Charlie and Mr. Billings; Malcolm and Warren rode the jump seats, and the two ladies in back, with Glen, the baby, between them. When Bernice and Lewis Woods graduated from grammar school, and went by CV train to Northfield High School, Charlie got out his car every morning to drive Bernice to the Railroad Station and pick her up there when the southbound afternoon train dropped her off. Lewis Woods also rode the train, but since his father's store is just up the road from the station, he walked back and forth.

Mrs. Gilbert set a famous table. The Gilberts took in paying guests during tourist season. Charlie was a squire for the ladies, and took overnight guests for hayrides or showed them through his cowbarn and invited them to slide down his haymow. He was janitor for the schoolhouse, and first on hand and last to leave square dances Saturday nights when the upstairs was converted into a dancehall. The building jumped with the dancers, and you could hear the fiddle and the prompter a quarter mile up or down the road. Men brought in bootleg whiskey and rotgut wine and nice ladies like Mrs. Gilbert and Mrs. Montague never attended. Our folks wouldn't let us go near Saturday nights, but sometimes we sneaked up the road and listened from across the brook and sneaked back home without saying where we had been.

-O-

One Friday morning in August between my junior and senior year, Mr. Lynch came down to my house and said they wanted to surprise Kenneth. He had arranged with the head counselor of the camp for me to come Friday night and stay over till Sunday afternoon. It wouldn't cost anything. Camp Nulahka made a practice of inviting fresh air kids from the city, and they would let me come free. Pop and Mom couldn't decide yes or no; they said I always mowed Mrs. Durkee's lawn Saturdays. I could see they were bothered about accepting anybody's charity. I wanted to go, and though I didn't say so, they could see how

much I wanted to. Clayton spoke up and said he would mow Mrs. Durkee's lawn for me, and that was the way it was left. I had an old pair of khaki pants Mom shortened, and I borrowed a khaki shirt we found in Mel's chiffonier drawer upstairs. I went without even having time to go over to see Mrs. Durkee whether it was all right with her.

When we got to camp, Mr. Lynch took me straight to the cabin of Mr. Sturgeon, the Director, a medium-sized young man, dressed in khaki like the campers, and spruce and athletic with well developed muscles in his calves and upper arms. I could feel him sizing me up in one glance. He held out his hand, saying, "So this is our visitor. How are you, Lyle?"

I said I was fine, and we shook on it and he turned to Mr. Lynch and said how well Kenneth was shaking down this summer.

"All our counselors report he has developed a great deal. We have full quotas, so I'm just going to leave Lyle with Kenneth, who can show him around and get him to the Lodge for supper. We have no seating plan, believing in letting the boys choose their own comrades. They sit anywhere, so that's no problem. Right now they are all in their cabins for rest hour. If you'll take Lyle to Kenneth, he can introduce him around and bring him to my cabin after campfire, and I'll see he is settled for the night. Is that all right with you, youngster?"

I said that it was.

When we got to Kenneth's cabin, Mr. Lynch sprang his surprise that I was going to stay over two nights. I couldn't see that Kenneth was jumping for joy. He looked at my frayed white sneakers and at his own tan ones, and then at my worn shorts and blouse that was too large for me. Mr. Lynch didn't linger.

Kenneth introduced me to his counselor, who looked me over, then said to Kenneth, "Well, I see you finally got your bunk made!" and went on about his business. Everything went along all right. We changed to go swimming, and after that it was time for supper.

You got in line for a tray and tin silver and other stuff, and got served by Cookie standing on the other side of a long counter between us and the stove.

I was not very comfortable, not knowing where I'd be sleeping, and there were so many boys, all strangers to me. After campfire, Kenneth took me to Mr. Sturgeon, who took me in tow.

All around us were the voices of campers settling down for the night, comfortable and jolly. I followed Mr. Sturgeon in through the dininghall and upstairs into a barnlike space with windows looking out on tree branches. There were wall lights each side of the fireplace, and over near the windows there was a made-up cot. There were stacks of folding chairs piled along one side.

Mr. Sturgeon asked if I was afraid to sleep there alone, and I said, "No."

I didn't tell him I practically grew up in the woods. He went and got one of the chairs and unfolded it and set it up beside the cot and sat there. While he watched, I skinned out of my clothes and into my pajamas.

After I climbed into bed, he said, "I want you to promise me, if you get afraid any time, I want you to come to my cabin."

He stood and bent over me. "Promise?"

He lingered. "No matter how late. Just come and knock on my door."

I looked up at him through squinted eyes. I was thinking. he really wants me to come.

He folded the chair and carried it over to the stack at the head of the stairs, switched out the light and I heard his footsteps going downstairs and across the diningroom.

Along in the night, I woke up, and the moon was shining in the west windows. I wished Mr. Sturgeon would come to look how I was doing. Right now I could go to his cabin and pretend I was scared. I raised up in bed and looked out the window down over the camp. It must have been after midnight. I could go down there and knock on his door. I decided not to.

The next day, dressing in Kenneth's cabin after a bunch of us went for an afternoon dip, I was beginning to feel more at home. One of the older boys said, "Old Sturgeon was in the shower room yesterday when I came out of the shower. He asked me how long I have hairs growing on my balls."

I was glad I didn't go to his cabin. He might have taken me in charge, and I wouldn't get to know any of the campers. I didn't see Mr. Sturgeon again till Mr. Lynch came for me Sunday afternoon, and took me to say goodbye.

All he said was, "I hope you had a good time, youngster."

I said, "Yes, I did, thank you."

He said, "Maybe next year we will have you again."

Chapter Thirteen

1927-8

16 yrs

When we returned to school in fall 1927, there was a hubbub. For some reason Mr. Skillings was not at the high school the first day and Miss Lawley had to preside. That evening right after supper there was a knock on our door. It was Daddy Baxter, school janitor, a runt of a man even shorter than I, who said he had driven Mr. Skillings down from Northfield, and they wanted to talk to me. They were going on to see Steve Maynard and would like me to go with them. I told Pop and Mom where I was going.

After we picked up Steve at his house, we sat in the car and Mr. Baxter did most of the talking, Mr. Skillings hardly saying a word after he gave us his greeting. He sat and listened while Daddy told us that some boys in the senior class were accusing Mr. Skillings of misbehaving last May on the Washington trip --what he actually said was the boys were saying, "Mr. Skillings tried to get after us..." Daddy assumed Steve and I knew what he meant, and, though I was eager for specifics, we both nodded.

"It's a lie," Daddy said, "and we all know it. I guess I know Mr. Skillings as well as anybody in Northfield. It would have been impossible for him to carry on without my knowing about it."

He asked me whether that wasn't right. "He never got after you, did he?"

I said he didn't. Daddy never asked Steve anything. Mr. Skillings sat there quiet through it all and hardly said anything.

The next day Miss Lawley was in charge again. At noon she brought me a note from Mr. Skillings, who was staying down across the road in Ye Olde Tavern ("On the New England Bridal Trail"), where he roomed last year. He

would like to see Steve and me during noon hour. When we went there, he was very sober. He thanked us for coming.

"This is very embarrassing," he said, "...and I want to say goodbye to you two friends, and tell you there is nothing in the charges that have been made against me."

He told us he got wind of the charges during the summer, and decided to take a job down on the coast and had dropped in at Northfield to clear his name, and see a few friends, and pick up boxes stored at the Inn. He didn't attempt to detain us, and we didn't stay long.

That evening he and Daddy arrived again at my house, and we went down again to Steve's. When I got home, Pop asked, "Did that teacher ever lay hands on you?" I told him he didn't. Pop took my word for it.

Miss Lawley became principal, and they hired another woman to take Mr. Skillings' classes. I didn't know what to think. I had a sneaking suspicion something had been going on between Mr. Skillings and Steve on those hikes, the way they were always hanging on to each other and tittering and yanking and hawling, but I don't have any proof about their carryings on after they left me at home and went on to Steve's. I never asked Steve about it. A month or so later, I was in school during my study hour in the big home room, and Daddy came along pushing a drymop, and stopped beside my desk and leaned over and confided, "The more I think of it, Lyle, the more I think there must have been something to it." I whispered back that I agree with him.

-O-

In that senior year, I came under the influence of Mrs. Emma P. Fitt, Dwight L. Moody's daughter, who married an Irish evangelist. Mrs. Fitt had boundless organizing skill, and in the fall of 1927 came to the High School and offered her help raising money for our senior class trip to Washington.

Mrs. Fitt was absolutely oblivious to class distinction. I doubt if she ever gave a thought what it meant to be poor. I was in awe of her, but too remote from her to be much noticed. When she staged a production of Madame Tussaud's Wax Works, I -- even though I was class runt -- was given the role of George Washington. My part called for me to stand on a high wooden box (to increase my height) and wear a flowing white wig and black Commencement

robe and embrace the pole of a large American flag while gazing rapturously at the stars and stripes.

I've never had any recollection of the tableaux preceding or following, remembering only how, standing in the wings bewigged and robed and burdened with the flag, I heard a thunder of applause for the Work just staged, and was grabbed by two frenzied hands while a shrill voice proclaimed, "Get him out of those impossible shoes!"

I was wearing the only shoes I owned, a pair of orange brogans with enormously swollen balloon-shaped toes. Mrs. Fitt was kneeling at my feet unlacing one of my shoes, her eyes traveling wildly here and there until she reached out with a free hand and stopped an actor leaving the stage wearing black shoes of a distinguished polish.

"Get out of those shoes," she hissed. "Now! I mean now!"

Six feet one, and wearing size ten-and-a-half, her quarry was un-shod, I was re-shod, and she was lacing the new shoes, and I was clomping on stage in my gunboats and hoist onto the high platform behind the drawn curtain, which instantly parted as lights dimmed. There were the usual Ohs and Ahs from the abyss. but not for me. I was galvanized by humiliation. Then the curtain was closing to another thunder of applause, and I was hustled offstage and left to step out of George Washington's shoes into my own. Mrs. Fitt was busy with another emergency. I was sure she never gave a thought to my feelings, nor did anyone else in the audience or the cast. I was simply a prop, and properly so.

-O-

Just before Christmas, Pop and Mom told me they had a letter from Mrs. Royce in Bellows Falls inviting me to spend Christmas with her. She wanted me to spend Christmas Eve and Christmas Day at her house, and come back home the day after Christmas. They didn't tell me what she wanted to see me for, and I didn't know whether they knew, but they seemed anxious I should go. Mrs. Royce still held first mortgage on our house that the folks were paying interest on.

I didn't want to miss Christmas at home, but had to take the CV train through West Northfield and Vernon and Brattleboro and Putney to Bellows Falls station. Nobody met me, so I had to find my way to the address. Mrs. Royce didn't live in a house by itself but upstairs in an apartment with another apartment

downstairs. She was still a nice enough woman and was being good to me, but I didn't feel very happy to come into her dark kitchen, where she was waiting for me. A tall, thin woman with white hair, she was wearing a tightfitting black dress. Her mouth was more pinched than I remembered, as if she had a bad taste she would like to get rid of. I already missed the folks and Melvin and Clayt and Larry. It was no fun to be here sixty miles from home on the night before Christmas.

She showed me my bedroom, small with a single bed, on the back side of the house with the shades drawn. When she left me to get supper, I sat on the bed, then got up and put my suitcase into the closet, and pulled back the shade and peeked out on a miserable backyard, without a smitchen of grass growing in it, only a tumbledown doghouse in the north corner against a high wooden fence, a dismal prospect.

For supper we had two scrambled eggs for both of us and some package pudding without sugar or milk and a glass of water. She sent me to bed early. I used her bathroom, then went back and rolled the shade way up and took my copy of David Copperfield out of my suitcase, but the single small overhead bulb didn't give enough light to read, and it was too dark outside to help, so I undressed and crawled into bed.

It was so dark next morning I slept late till Mrs. Royce called me to breakfast. Christmas morning, there was not one single present. We had black coffee and toast and a dropped egg apiece. Then I helped with dishes, and she wanted me to come to the sitting room, where she went to a rollertop desk and came back with some papers she held in her lap and never looked at.

She was very mysterious. She mentioned the mortgage she held on our house and tapped one of the papers, then skipped to a plan she had to open a store. She would move out the downstairs tenants and use their big front room facing the street. She wanted me to come live with her after graduation. I would be her clerk and when she died she would leave me the store and the house and all her money.

"What do you think of that?"

She asked it as if she expected me to shout for joy. I was mostly homesick for Christmas at home.

She said, "I want you to think it over and when you get home talk to your folks. I will be able to have the work done and get in an inventory and you will be able to come here to live with me and run the store right after graduation."

She put the papers away and went out to the kitchen to get our dinner. We had a small pork chop and boiled potato apiece and a piece of store apple pie.

We went back in the livingroom, where she talked about the Farms and about Frank Howe who married her daughter who was dead before we came to live in the shanty, so we never knew her. It was a dreary afternoon indoors and out. I never had a chance to leave the apartment but had to sit there and listen to her talk about old times in Northfield Farms and her life in Bellows Falls with her husband before she went to live with her daughter and Frank Howe and stayed on when her daughter died.

For supper we had bread and soda crackers and milk and two more slices of store pie.

We went to bed early, and I didn't make any attempt to read my book. The next morning I took the train home.

The folks asked me about Mrs. Royce and how she was, and I told them she was fine, and about her plan to have me be her storekeeper and if I came to work for her she would leave me her money. The folks wanted to know what I thought of it, and I told them I didn't want to go live with Mrs. Royce, and we didn't say any more about it.

-O-

With the help of Mrs. Fitt, our class got the money we needed, and a dozen of us with Miss Lawley as chaperon got our Washington trip, from which, afterwards, I recalled the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument and the Mall in cherry blossom time, the unfinished National Cathedral, a trip to Monticello, and Mount Vernon in rhododendron time, and the Library of Congress and the Washington Zoo. From overnight in New York City, I recalled Wall Street, the unfinished Cathedral of St. John, and especially Chinatown, not only its oriental splendor, but an incident when Fay Smith advised me that Sadie Czestowicky and Catherine Scoble were being propositioned by "procurers." When I turned to look, both were reboarding the bus, so my interference as class president and chaperon pro tem was not required.

Just before graduation, Mrs. Fitt sought me out and told me I must come to her house to meet her brother Paul, President of Middlebury College. I simply must go to Middlebury and the fact I was penniless didn't deter her. However, I was practical enough not to pursue the thought. Nor did I ignore it. I tucked the prospect away for frequent and absolute contemplation, never forgetting I had a rain check to cash if the time ever came when I could.

-O-

Pop got both Mel and me jobs in the stockroom of Millers Falls Tool Company, where he was foreman. I started saving every penny, resolved to apply for Middlebury for 1929-30. Without that possibility I could not have endured the thought of the factory as much as an hour.

Chapter Fourteen

1928, Factory,
Age 17

It was a beautiful fall afternoon, and cornshooks were stacked for harvest in the field across the road between our house and the cemetery. Either late afternoon on a school day or Saturday afternoon, a crowd of us -- Glaziers and Lynches and Cotas were playing hide and seek -- hiding in cornshooks. Kenneth Lynch's little brother Billy and I ran for the same cornstack and burrowed to the back and pulled loose stalks to close the doorway. We were in a small tepee, snuggled together. In the distance by the maple tree we heard Buddy Cota finish his call: "...forty-one, forty-two, fortythree, fortyfour, fortyfive, forsixforseven frnine fifty, anybody hiding around my goal will be IT!" Alert for the goal keeper to approach, we heard the rush of feet as Kenneth Lynch and Glen Billings rushed past and tagged the tree -- home free. Way over there somebody else was safe. A long time nothing happened, Buddy still on the hunt. There was a shout of discovery. Dorothy Lynch and Barbara Cota were found in a stack near ours, then heavy footsteps as Buddy ran past our hiding place, followed by the two girls, both shouting. He had caught them fairly, and one of them would be IT for the next game. From across the road to our left, we heard the door to our house open. Mom was calling Clayton and Larry and me for supper. As if on cue from down the road, Mrs. Cota was at her door calling the Cotas. Buddy was shouting, "Gobble gobble in free!"

Billy and I were snug in our nest, huddled together, warm, late-September sunlight streaming in on our hideaway. Billy, a little kid, had my pants open and was playing with me. It felt better than it ever had. I settled down and watched his hand move up and down, squeezing. It was time to go to supper, and I heard the door slam as Clayton and Larry went in. I had never felt so pulled out of myself; I couldn't help myself, it was wonderful. I stopped holding back, it was spouting all over. Billy slipped past me and away. I dried myself with corn fodder, and tried to wipe away the wet from my fly. I was in a hurry to get home and was very quiet through supper. I helped Mom with dishes and did my homework.

Lying in bed later, I wondered if I had lost a baby. I couldn't go to sleep. I lay awake for a long time. The next night I woke up from my dreams and found myself wet, and dried myself with my nightgown. I was crying, sure I had lost a baby. Every night it happened: I lost a baby every night. Before Melvin came to bed from where he had been in the car he persuaded Pop to buy for carrying us to and from work, I'd pull on an old pair of knickers over my pajamas and sleep on my hands, but it did no good. In the middle of the night some time after he came to bed, it kept happening and I couldn't stop it: I was a monster, destroying myself. It kept right on happening.

-O-

George Lee and Old Disky and Mel and I sat around the work bench sorting castings, George spending a good amount of time positioning barrels so each of us could simply lean over the barrel that came from the foundry and without moving from our seat grab a casting and tap it on a metal block in front of us. If it sang out, it went into one barrel; if it gave off a dull thud, it went into the other.

"It all depends on the way you set up," George explained for the hundredth time. "You c'n waste hours if you're not set up right."

We sat there maybe all day from 7 am check-in till noon, and 1 pm till 5 o'clock check out, reaching into the incoming barrel, picking out a casting, whanging it on the block, and tossing it into Save or Discard. It became so automatic, you didn't think about it. Once in a great while one of us had to get up from his seat and go over to Save/Discard to pick out a casting we'd thrown into

the wrong barrel. A lot of the time we didn't even say anything: it was reach whang plop, reach whang plop, hour after hour.

A little runt of a guy like I was, George was about thirty-five, married, no children. He and his wife lived in the basement apartment of a three decker house we passed on the hill on the right going home. He packed his cheek with snuff, his teeth red and dirty-looking around the gums, and a lot of the time he was in a deep, drowsy haze. Once in a while he told the same story -- sometimes several times the same day:

-- "This wife, you see, gets bored with doing nuthin but settin in the kitchen every night guzzling booze. She says, 'I betcha I can beat you at pitching quoits.' So she leaves him soakin up some more booze, and goes to the store. Pretty quick she comes back with a big package and a little package. She gives the big package to him and keeps the little package for herself. She tells him to take off his clothes, and she takes hers off. She says the point of the game is to pitch quoits. 'You pitch at mine, I pitch at yourn.' She gives him the first crack. He reaches into his bag and takes out a grapefruit. She reaches into hern and takes out a roll of lifesavers, and peels off one from the top. 'We hafta see who can get the most hole-in-ones or ringers.'"

George always stopped there with a long pause while he looked us over to see whether we caught on to the point of the game. He sighed and went back to work.

Once or twice during a morning or afternoon, George let off a fart and got up and went to the backhouse. When he came back, he always asked the same question: "What's the first thing you do after taking a piss?" He waited for a minute. "You wink yer asshole." He sat down very satisfied with himself.

Here was a man thirty-five years old, and his contribution to human knowledge was summed up in his discovery that he never failed to wink his asshole after taking a piss. It should be listed in the Guinness Book of Records under George Lee's Law of Alimentary Reciprocity.

-O-

I was standing under the gallery of the dance floor at Lake Pleasant. It was dark on the dance floor where Mel was dancing with Pheenie. He brought me with him last week, but I didn't dance, only watched -- the way I was doing

tonight. They had a pianist and a saxophone and were playing "I Can't Give you Anything but Love, Baby." I liked the music, but I felt squashed up inside.

Mel told me before we left home, "All you have to do is ask somebody. Plenty of girls would dance with you."

I couldn't. Tonight there were little claques of girls all over the place. They were bunched in twos and threes and fours, mostly under the gallery over on the other side, talking and chewing gum, and looking across at us standing over opposite them not asking anybody to dance.

Last week there was a little girl younger than I, I guess. She kept looking across at me. If she were here again tonight I would ask her. The girls who were here were all older and looked a lot smarter than I was. They kept letting their eyes sweep over this side of the hall where a half dozen men were bunched. The girls were in little bunches talking together, but we men were alone, just standing, waiting for something or someone. I looked at the pianist and wished I could play the way he could. I have started lessons once a week with Miss Lincoln, but she was only interested in classical and would never teach me to play jazz, even if I wanted to and I didn't because I loved classical. I went up from the shop to her studio across the River at the end of the Bridge, just this week started. She gave me a piece by Paderewski called "Minuet a L'Antique," -- hard but I liked it.

It was already the end of September, most of the cottages already closed, summer people having gone back home to Greenfield or Athol or Orange, or wherever. They came weekends now to close down for winter, and this was the next to the last Saturday the dancehall would be open this year. Mel told me the owner was going south to operate another dancehall during the winter.

It was almost the last dance of the evening, but somebody was just coming in -- a man and a woman and the little girl I saw last week. They looked around the hall and the man whispered to the girl and she whispered back and then the man and woman started dancing. Instead of joining the other women, the girl came along this way along the edge where the men were and was watching the dancers.

She was standing in front of me, saying, "You aren't dancing." She was very small, almost as small as Mom. She held out her arms, and we were shuffling into the dance. I was glad it was a slow piece because I was stumbling all over myself.

She said, "You're a natural dancer."

We were dancing around the edge of the floor keeping out of the center.

"That's my brother Dr. John and his wife Caroline. Aren't they just beautiful?"

They caught up with us, smiling at us; then they went into a gliding slide into the middle of the floor.

She said, "I wish I could dance the way they can."

"I'm just a beginner."

"Nonsense. you're a natural."

She snuggled up to me, and we were doing better. I could see Melvin and Pheenie in the center of the dance floor, where he had his eyes closed, hardly moving.

She said, "My name is Janice, what's yours?"

"I'm Lyle."

"Is that your brother you were with last week?"

"Yes."

"We're here to close up the cottage. We drove over from Athol and weren't coming tonight, but I told Dr. John I wanted to look see if somebody was here, so we came."

I didn't ask who she was looking for. I was trying to hold my hips back because she was squeezing in tight and it was beginning to feel good and I was afraid she would notice.

They were playing "Hail! Hail! the gang's all here," and we were all dancing like crazy. Then they were playing "Moonlight and Roses" very slow.

We were all standing on the floor clapping. We clapped harder, but the pianist was collecting his music. The saxophonist picked up his saxophone and tipped the horn up towards the ceiling, and started playing "The Last Rose of Summer," and the pianist joined him, very dreamy. Everybody was shuffling, hardly moving. Then it was over.

Dr. John and Caroline came where we were standing near the door, Caroline tall and beautiful, and smiling at me and Janice. "Did you have a good time?"

Janice introduced me to her brother and Caroline, making a point of calling him Dr. John. It sounded peculiar when he was her brother. Then she

introduced me, pausing after Lyle, and I said Glazier and her brother asked where I lived, and I told him, and Janice was whispering to him.

"Not tonight, Janice."

They were leaving. Mel and Pheenie came over, and I introduced them and when I said, Dr. John, her brother laughed and said, "I'm a chiropractor. I'm John Damour. I've just got my degree and my family won't let me forget it."

Janice was tugging at his sleeve, and he leaned down and she whispered, and he said, "I guess not tonight, Janice."

They left, walking.

I got into the back seat of the Dort, and rode along with Mel and Pheenie, and went to sleep when they parked in the trees a quarter mile from the pavilion, and woke up an hour and a half later when we turned in on the backyard behind the house and coasted into the new garage opened up under the barn with the engine and lights switched off not to wake Pop and Mom.

-O-

I had no sex with anyone. However, in the second summer Melvin came back from Lake Pleasant and told me there was a girl asking for me, and, chiefly because of his influence I started going to dances. I couldn't explain what drew me to Janice when I was so indifferent to women and so drained. She was sweet and sensual. After a dance we sat on the steps leaning against each other and dreaming in July/August heat, and it was obvious what she intended but she was enough younger that she never reached to touch me. We talked about the most ordinary things, but often she encouraged me to dream about going to college. We closed in on each other but without consequence, except from some hidden glandular wellspring juices flowed, and I found myself with an erection that I hid from her. It throbbed until it hurt.

After an hour of it, Mel and Pheenie came back from spooning and picked us up to carry Janice back to the cottage where a light in the window informed us her mother was waiting up for her, but nobody in her family seemed worried about her, as if they were in league to bring us together.

For a Sunday in early August I was invited for lunch, and Mel drove me over. Although I had had a license to drive for a long time, it never occurred to me to ask if I could have the car so Mel drove me over and went on to Pheenie,

with the understanding he would come back in a couple of hours. Dr. John and Caroline had had a baby, a son. They were perfect. It was as if they were putting on a performance of what a marriage ought to be. Caroline was lovely, a big sister, Dr. John was Adam, Little John was Cupid and Janice adored all three.

Once she told me, "Dr. John told me what boys like."

I knew what she was inviting, but it was as if I knew the invitation was not suitable for me.

There was a special occasion, almost the end of August when another invitation to Sunday lunch came. That day when Mel dropped me off there was nobody there but Janice, her mother, Dr. John, Caroline, and the baby not even mentioned. We talked and talked as if avoiding an issue.

Finally she suggested we go swimming, and we went upstairs where she showed me a room to change and she went to another without shutting a door. We were a long time changing. I didn't go to her, and she didn't come to me. I sat and waited a long time after I put on my swimming trunks till finally she came, carrying two towels and we walked out into August heat and along the sandy track to the public beach.

I recall nothing except we walked out into shallows till water was up to our hips and we stood there for an hour, it seemed, talking. There were families around us, children swimming, old folks sitting at tables gabbing and some of them eating. We were standing in warm water up to our belly buttons. I was vividly aware now of her presence, but we didn't either of us even splash water on the other. She was small like Mom. She was a sophomore in high school. We went back and spread our towels and lay in the sun, then moved into the shade of some trees, then walked back to the cottage. I to my room, she to hers.

I sat awhile naked after I took off my wet trunks, just sat there, as if waiting, then pulled on my underclothes and pants and shirt, feeling her presence in the room across the partition from where I sat but I did nothing and she did nothing. When she came to the door of my room, she was dressed, and we went downstairs and had sandwiches and birch beer from the ice box.

I was wearing my high school ring and she asked to try it on and I let her. When she asked if she could wear it, I knew what she meant, but I didn't ask for it back. When Mel blew the horn outside, we went out together and said goodbye without kissing.

Chapter Fifteen

Spring 1929

Middlebury prospects at 18

Mrs. Fitt kept in touch with me and I wrote to Middlebury for their catalogue for 1929-30. After family conferences I sent my application for admission and scholarship aid, and followed with an application to have my fee for board waived in return for waiting on table at "freshman commons." The phrase had an aura of glamour, nobody in the family having ever attended college, so that procedures and vocabularies were foreign. I anguished over every required form and Melvin and the folks knew no more about any of this than I did.

I preferred not to consult Mrs. Fitt because I didn't wish to advertise our ignorance. I thought if I could get a full scholarship and a job waiting on table for board, I might have enough to carry me into second semester. I allowed nothing for extras: I could get along without spending allowance, but one thing bothered me and bothered Mel just as much: what we knew for sure from movies was that a college student must have a tuxedo. At the men's clothing store in Millers Falls, I learned that for \$60 I could buy a tux and dress shirt and black tie, and with regret I decided it was an absolute necessity.

Responses from the Dean of Admissions were encouraging. I used Mrs. A. P. Fitt's name as a reference and presumed she made it known she was President Moody's sister (that ought to amount to something).

She arranged for her brother to interview me at her house, and Melvin agreed to drive me there in the Dort. However, I was surprised when he got out to go in with me, and more surprised when he announced that he wished to go talk to Dr. Moody before I did. I didn't understand why, but I was used to yielding to my brother.

He was gone a long time, and I was nervously waiting my turn. Mrs. Fitt had introduced us to Dr. Moody, and then immediately disappeared, assuming, perhaps, there was no reason she should sit making small talk with Melvin.

I sat alone in her drawing room, hearing the voice of President Moody in the next room, and the voice of Melvin replying, both seeming very earnest although I couldn't hear what they were saying. Finally the study door opened, and Dr. Moody was shaking hands with Melvin and thanking him for coming and saying how much he hoped to see him again. I hardly paid attention I was so eager to present arguments I had carefully rehearsed to impress the great man.

He was a great man I could tell, and he listened to everything I said with great care, I plunging ahead with confidence, remembering how Mrs. Fitt had declared many times, "Once my brother gets a look at you, you won't have any trouble."

Yet I seemed to be meeting unexpected resistance, he being very gentle but somewhat vacant as if his mind was straying.

Finally I said "...so if I could get a job waiting on table..."

President Moody pulled himself back from wherever his mind had been wool gathering: "Perhaps we can work that out."

Then he added. "Melvin has been your advocate. He wants very much to see you at Middlebury."

There was a pause. "You are very young. I wonder if perhaps we shouldn't try this year to find a place for Melvin, and you can come next year."

I was utterly shocked. "But, Dr. Moody, Melvin hasn't even..."

"Yes, I know, he has thought only of you. But he is almost two years older. If he waits another year, it may be too late for him."

I hardly knew what happened next. I had made all my plans. I had the assurance of Mrs. Fitt, and Mel had never even mentioned being interested, spending his money on the car and on Pheenie, not grudging every penny spent as I did. The thought of another year in the toolshop confounded me.

"I have saved every penny. I have got enough for a semester even if I pay everything myself, I can do it. And the Dean of Admissions has practically promised me a full scholarship."

President Moody drew a long breath, stood up, and held out his hand. I felt a sinking in my spirit as if everything had been lost. My hand was grasped vigorously. It was as if for the first time President Moody was actually looking at me as a real person worth his attention.

"I will talk with Cap Wiley. Perhaps we can work something out. What would you think if we can find a place for you both?"

In the drawing room, the President seemed equally friendly to both. He shook our hands warmly and assured us we would be hearing from Dean Wiley shortly.

-O-

Some time along in the summer I got a letter from a Middlebury student:

DKE House
Middlebury College
Middlebury, VT
August 19, 1929

Dear Lysle,

How are you anyway? I am writing to tell you how glad I am to hear that you are coming to Middlebury. I have been here three years, going on four, and I hope you will have as good a time as I have. I understand you were an all A student in high school. We can use a few students of your caliber. When you get around to it, if you have time, please drop me a line and tell how you are doing.

Yours truly,
Bill Dixon
William R. Dixon

P.S.

I understand you are going to wait on table. I think you will like it. I have a job working downstairs in the kitchen and look forward to meeting you.

WICKED... and Spotless as the Lamb

Bill

I had some trouble with my answer. I thought I ought to correct his spelling of my name, but I didn't want to make a big deal of it, and decide to say nothing and just spell it right. Also, since he signed his letter Bill and then later wrote in that formal William, with some doubt, I decided to play safe and be formal:

Northfield Farms, Mass.,
August 23, 1929

Dear William,

Thank you very much for your letter. I am looking forward to coming to Middlebury, and to meeting you there. I have just got my room assignment to Middle Painter Hall. Perhaps we will meet the first day when I'm supposed to come to Hepburn Commons to find out about waiting on table. It was kind of you to write me. I appreciate it very much.

Yours truly,
Lyle
Lyle Glazier

P.S. Northfield High School is a small high school, and I expect
to be a small fish in a college like Middlebury.

Lyle

I got an immediate reply:

DKE House
Middlebury College
Middlebury VT
August 26, 1929

Dear Lyle,

Call me Bill. Your high school average is way beyond me.
Don't bother to answer. See you soon.

Bill

-O-

It was late afternoon Saturday before the Sunday we were driving to Middlebury, and Pop and Mom took me aside to tell me they didn't know what to do about Melvin. They hadn't intended to tell me, but they needed my advice because all the neighbors in the Farms were going to give us a farewell party at the school this very evening. Though they had had to tell Mel, he had taken the Dort anyway and gone to say goodbye to Pheenie. He had refused to listen to them and it would be terrible if he didn't show up at seven o'clock at the party.

It was already half past five, and I didn't see what could be done, though I did know where she lived from having been in the car many times when Mel dropped her off. She was the daughter of a factory hand, but I hardly knew what her last name was. I was sure they had no telephone any more than we had. I thought we had to trust Mel to show up. Perhaps he had in mind bringing her with him, but anyway we couldn't very well go to a neighbor and ask them to drive us to Millers Falls to corral him.

I could see how worried they were, and wondered exactly what had been said, but I couldn't believe Mel wouldn't come. Pop and Mom went into their bedroom to change their clothes, and Clayton and Larry came down from upstairs in their best suits. At a quarter to seven we set off up the road on foot, all of us tightlipped hoping to see the Dort in the schoolyard but it wasn't.

It was one of the worst evenings in my life. It was a social for the whole community, like a church supper. All the women had been cooking to show off their best dishes. Mrs. Gilbert brought her famous sour cream raisin pie. Mr. Tenney brought a freezer of vanilla ice cream. There were pots of baked beans, casseroles of sliced baked potatoes floating in thickened milk gravy, all kinds of vegetable salads, plates of steaming homemade brown bread, side dishes of home-packed pickles, a whole ham cured in the Woods's outdoor smokehouse. Mr. and Mrs. Montague had come down from Northfield with a turkey, Mrs. Ralph Lynch brought a three layer chocolate cake, and Mrs. Charles Lynch one of her frozen fruit jello salads. Mrs. Cota brought chicken salad, and the Billingses chicken pie. The Scobles, Podlenskis, and Bartuses were there with baked eggplant and steamed grape-leaves stuffed with roast lamb, and Mrs. Luey sent

a fifteen pound roast beef delivered at the door of the schoolhouse by their chauffeur, who then returned home and delivered Mr. and Mrs. Luey.

It was terribly embarrassing, everybody coming by to congratulate me, and asking where Mel was. I couldn't say how many times I explained I was sure he would turn up soon. Finally the backslapping stopped as the realization sank in that Melvin really wasn't coming. Most embarrassing of all was when after we had all stuffed ourselves with good will and good food, Mrs. Gilbert stood up with an envelope in her hand, and said how proud Northfield Farms was to have two of their boys going to College. She was wiping her eyes, incapable of improvising any departure from the speech she had rehearsed in advance and now delivered word for word:

"These two young men are our boys. We have watched them grow up. They are going to Middlebury as apostles from our little hamlet of Northfield Farms. They will be going from us --but we will always be happy, Melvin and Lyle, to welcome you into our homes and our hearts ...And now it is my pleasure to give this small token of our esteem."

She reached across the table and gave me the envelope. I stood to receive it. Several were shouting, "Open it!" Inside was a check for fifty dollars. Everybody was looking at me with kindness and charity.

"I thank all you friends," I said, "for us both." And then I blustered something about;, "...sure he is disappointed not to be here, and there's a good reason why."

Chapter Sixteen

Sept. 1929

First sight of Middlebury

After 140 miles from Northfield Farms, Melvin was driving. Pop and Clayt came with us to help us get settled and drive the Dort back. I was alert for my

first sight of the College, and, as we swung into the outskirts of Middlebury, caught a distant view of the chapel spire. The town was spread out in front of us, and when my eyes caught the thin blade on the western horizon, I was instantly in love. I was in love with the landscape of which the chapel tower was for me the center and had no doubt that this was a new life with a capacity to erase the no-life of my year in Millers Falls Tool Factory.

As we approached the village and then were absorbed into it, my psyche began to put on a new skin. I had no doubt of it. It would be the first time I lived in a village, and what a wonderful village it did seem. A boy from the farmlands with comfortable homes of the well-to-do and an occasional slum dwelling, from six miles south I never overcame my tremor entering Northfield with its square puritan houses set back behind a double row of elms on both sides of Main Street. I was so awed by it whenever I approached that in my senior year in high school, when Principal Evelyn Lawley suggested that for my graduation Valedictory I compose a speech on the Academy that had predated the high school, I could not bring myself to turn onto the sidewalk leading to the house of two reverend ladies who had "gone to" the Academy. Although I was told they would be "expecting" me, I simply didn't have nerve to face such distinguished ladies. For two afternoons in a row, I traipsed after school down past their house, then walked back toward the high school, turned around and walked past the house again, then gave up and returned to my bus in front of the high school. I was unable to turn onto that sidewalk, imagining those great ladies inside looking out at the nondescript boy passing by, simply unable to face them. I never explained to Miss Lawley why I failed this assignment, but I flunked it by writing a one-paragraph Valedictory, saying goodbye to the school, my teachers and classmates, and left to N. Fay Smith the distinction of being listed on the program as "Class Orator" who gave the speech on the Academy.

Now we were entering my new home, and I was not so much in awe as curious about it. I took a deep breath and dived into this new atmosphere, more sophisticatedly urban than Northfield or Millers Falls, or even Greenfield, our county seat back there in north central Massachusetts. As we rolled past the Middlebury Inn, then down by the Post Office and across the shop-cradling bridge, I already felt this would be my new home, and I would never return to my old one, because the person returning would not be the same.

Mel and I were to room in Middle Painter, on the third floor west, with a window looking out on campus hill lying out and up between us and the pillared front of the chapel. We entered into a "study" (the vocabulary itself was prestigious) equipped with two desks and assorted chairs and a work table, from where we progressed into a bedroom with two cotbeds and two bureaus for shirts, socks, and underclothes. Between the rooms was a closet for hanging our suit, overcoat and raincoat, and our tuxedos (one for each one of us). There was a fireplace (plastered over but the mantel still visible) on the north wall of each room. This was luxury. I had never in my dreams imagined such style. A note on one desk informed us that a cleaning lady came several times a week to sweep and mop the floor. We made our own beds and supplied our own linen, as we were warned weeks before leaving home, but we learned now we would have a maid to keep our rooms tidy.

I went that first Sunday late afternoon for an orientation for waiters at Hepburn Commons. The Head Waiter was a senior who introduced himself as Al Henry, a member of Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity. He looked distinguished and important, dressed casually in tweed jacket and tie and oxford gray trousers. He brought along with him and introduced the captain of varsity football Bill Dixon, also a member of Delta Kappa Epsilon. Bill wore his gym sweat suit as if just coming from a workout. He raised his hand and was warmly applauded.

We each had to stand and introduce ourselves, and it was clear that more than half of the twenty waiters were athletes, big guys looking not at all impressed with the Commons, which was so vast (with its twenty long tables, each with twelve chairs) that I felt scared at the new responsibility resting on me. I had never waited on table or given it much thought, except as a job that would take care of my board. . The din from another room beyond ours suggested that that was where the action would be. Loud voices, and the crashing of pots and pans and clanking of dishes sounded as if a battle of some sort was going on. It was very distracting and intimidating.

Mr. Henry looked us over in friendly fashion, then proceeded to give us instructions.

"Supper tonight is buffet. We will show you how to set the tables and where you can find trays and dishes in the serving room. We will use this table as the buffet. You will bring the food here from the serving room. After your

tables are set and everything ready here at the buffet, you can sit tonight with your friends. All other meals you are expected to show up at least an hour ahead of time to set up your tables and eat your own meal. If you don't allow yourself enough time, you will go hungry. There will be no meals served for you after the diningroom has been served. Tonight, as after every meal, you will clear your table and carry dishes and everything else to the serving counter except salt and pepper shakes and sugar bowls. They are left on your table. We have a helper who sees to it that salt and pepper shakes and sugar bowls are kept full, but you should check on them. When you have cleared the table, you must scrub it down with a damp cloth. That's your job and not somebody else's. After you have carried dirty dishes to the serving room tonight, Miss Bowles will show you how to use the dishwashers. It's very important to establish one rule. Looking now toward the serving room, you notice two doors, one at each end. As we face them, you will use the one on your right for bringing anything out of the serving room. Now look the other way to the door on the left. You will use that door on the left only for carrying things back. And I mean by that even if the only thing you are carrying is yourself. During mealtime, never enter the serving room from the door on the right. Never leave it from the door on the left! I warn you once and for all of the consequences if you don't obey that rule. The sound of a collision between two loaded trays is not sweet music. Remember, use one door to enter, the other to exit. It's as simple as that."

He looked around at us, smiling reassuringly. "So much for that. Are there questions?"

There were none. I supposed all of us, like me, were trying to digest the consequences if we didn't remember everything he said. I had held a lot of different jobs but this one seemed fraught with peril. I looked around the table to see if anybody was as scared as I was. A little fellow who told us he came from Peacham looked pale. One or two of the athletic type looked bored.

Mr. Henry took a paper out of his pocket and glanced at it and seemed satisfied. He went on:

"And now it is my pleasure to introduce Miss Mary N. Bowles, Dietitian, who is in charge of the Commons. She sees to it that you get a proper diet and plenty of it. She is your boss here in the diningroom and the servingroom. She will ride herd on you. She will give you your assignments for the dishwasher."

A little woman sitting beside him braced herself as if she had been holding herself in.

Mr. Henry seemed about to sit down when he straightened up again: "...one more thing. It is a long standing and proud tradition at Hepburn for waiters to call themselves scullions. At the end of the year you will have a scullions's ball, one of the most exclusive Middlebury social functions to which no man can be invited unless he has waited on table. Of course, you bring guests from the other side of our campus."

Mr. Henry sat down amid applause. .

Miss Bowles smiled bravely and began, "I would like to make one correction. Mr. Henry is your boss in the diningroom. If there is any riding herd here he will do it. I am dietitian and in charge of the serving room. I will give you your assignments for the dishwashing machine. If you do your work well and on time, you and I will have no trouble." She sat down.

A small elderly lady raised her hand, and Mr. Henry introduces her: "Mother Mason, the matron of Hepburn Hall."

She smoothed down her dress and touched her hair. "Some of you know me already if you live in Hepburn Hall, which is, as you know, the freshman dormitory. I would like to welcome you all, and to offer my help if I can ever be of help. My instructions from President Moody are to be in loco parentis. If it makes you feel better, you can call me Mother. My office is on the ground floor on the right as you enter. I am there every day including Sunday. Simply knock on my door. I would like to say one thing more, and you may hear it again." She paused and added, "...and again. I do not like the word scullion because I think it is undignified. I would like to see the name changed to servitor."

Everybody looked slightly puzzled at her intensity. There was polite applause as she sat down.

As we all stood up to stretch, Bill Dixon went around stopping here there to introduce himself. When he came to me, he stretched out his hand, "Well, here we are. I was reading over your record. That is some record, not a single grade under A all through high school."

He stood there grinning and I smiled back, feeling dwarfed by his magnitude and importance. I thought that if he was sizing me up for athletic prowess, it wouldn't take long to make up his mind. He walked around the table,

stopping two or three times to talk to other freshmen, then disappeared, waving his hand.

Chapter Seventeen

Sept. 1929

Independence

Beginning Monday morning, there were a series of Orientation Meetings for freshmen. The first was a lecture on "Personal Hygiene," the lecturer Springfield College head coach, a large blowsy athletic man, who began by saying, "I have come at the invitation of my friend President Moody to give you some man-to-man talk about taking care of your bodies."

He told us his college is where basketball was invented. Then he said, "I'm going to make myself comfortable by resting my cheeks," meaning he is settling his well-padded ass on the edge of the table. He advised us to take care of our bodies, and said he would be happy to answer any questions "anything at all you care to ask me at the end of my lecture, or feel free to interrupt whenever the spirit moves you."

At first he talked about sports programs as opportunities to keep fit. From there he moved on to "Male Sexuality." He advised us to be sure to roll back the foreskin every day and clean out the deposit that accumulates, telling us "It is perfectly normal and nothing to be ashamed of, but, to tell the truth, it stinks."

He laughed and most everybody laughed with him. It was clear he was getting into the meat of his address. He went on to "nocturnal emissions, or what you may call wet dreams. I'm sure you know what I'm talking about. They are the way the body takes care of the excess fluid and sperm manufactured in your testicles and designed by Nature for reproduction. While I'm about it, I might add that a single sperm is enough to create a child, and millions of sperm are ejaculated with every wet dream."

A dozen hands were wagging. He signaled one, and a very relaxed boy, slouched in his chair, asked nonchalantly, "What about masturbation?"

"Thank you. I was coming to that. Some people call it a sin, but I must admit that I see nothing sinful. But keep it within reason. Three times a day might drain you, but once a week won't kill you. You may have heard that

famous saying, 'Once a king, always a king, but once a knight is sufficient.' On the contrary, I think once a knight would be excessive."

This was more sex than I'd heard in my lifetime. I had never discussed sex with anybody and could hardly believe what he said about wet dreams. That took care of my problem, because right up even to last night in our new bedroom, I had my usual discharge, and, blasted wide awake, stared into the new darkness, for a moment having no idea where I was, then mopped myself up, resigned to the inevitable. But this morning's lecture had changed everything.

The rest of the lecture was on our duty to co-eds, the "fresh-women" of the Women's College at Middlebury -- "...your future wives and the mothers of your children."

There was general give-and-take about abstention. A lot of guys joined the discussion. The upshot seemed to be "Socialize but don't take advantage of women." One wag felt that the problem was how to protect yourself from them. There was a lot of goodnatured laughter.

Since we had been told most freshmen classes were segregated, and I had no money to socialize, I didn't intend to fret over worrying I might get some co-ed in trouble. Having for more than two years had a soul-crushing sense of sin, in one burst of freedom it came to me I could take care of myself, never again feel guilty, and I resolved to take the coach's word that sex should be joyful.

-O-

Mel and I had no idea of joining a fraternity, hardly knowing what they were. Monday afternoon we got an inkling when Ken Dodd, a freshman neighbor, popped in to invite us to go with him to meet some new friends of his at the Kappa Kappa House on Weybridge Street. He called it "one of the smaller, more exclusive fraternities."

Not yet having any homework because classes hadn't started, we had time on our hands, so went along with Ken. We got a refreshingly warm welcome. For a couple of homesick freshmen it was like meeting somebody from home. There were loud welcoming noises from several older boys in the homey and somewhat disheveled livingroom. Ken disappeared, but Mel and I were taken over by the student assistant to the Glee Club and another brother who was interested in Mel when he heard that Mel played the saxophone. It

turned out that the Kappa Kappas were musically involved in both the jazz band that plays for Saturday night dances in the Gym and the Glee Club that would be holding auditions Wednesday evening at the Music Building. It seemed Big Time stuff. Last year's jazz band had a summer contract on a cruise ship, and the Glee Club every year went on tour -- to New York City, for example, where they sang over WOR and gave a major recital at International House, next door to Columbia University. The prospects were staggering and opportunities were made to seem sure despite the fact that Mel played only a few growlers on his sax, and my Glee Clubbing had been limited to singing falsetto for Mrs. Frank Montague when I was a child, and as an adolescent doing a black face solo for Lewis Woods's minstrel show.

Before Mel and I were separated, our hosts managed to pry out of us the information that we both were class presidents at Northfield High, and valedictorians of our class. This news brought an exchange of knowing glances from our hosts with exclamations over what this would do for the "frat average." We were feeling important. I soon found myself seated at the piano with Howard Stone on the bench with me, leafing through some long and complicated (it seemed to me) jazz scores highlighting the piano part. The score spread all over the music rack and off on both sides. Howie (a senior who already was telling me to use his nickname) screwed up my courage and I timidly struck a few bars reflecting utter confusion. He moved me over and showed me how it was done, folding the score expertly, then banging chords with a beat that howled off the page, and ran ahead and then halted with wheezing rhythmical fits and starts at unexpected places.

"You improvise your own rhythm," Howie explained. "With your natural talent, you'll catch on directly." Then he went on to say he happened to have a few scores used by the band because for next Saturday's dance after intermission he was going to be stand-in for the regular piano player who had to leave on the eleven o'clock train to go home for a family emergency.

He asked if I would play something for him, and I started the opening bars of Marche Militaire, which impressed him greatly. He slapped me vigorously on the thigh, and turned to Mel and his host, and, with his right arm across my shoulder and his left on my thigh squeezing in friendly fashion, yelled back to

them, "Whaddya know about that! Won't it be great to have a real musician in the house!"

Feeling all warm and cuddled, but somewhat embarrassed at this expression of affection in public, I wiggled out of his embrace. He said how great it would be to have somebody you could wrestle with like a real human being.

"You remind me of my kid brother."

I really liked him. It was flattering to have the admiration of such a distinguished senior.

I said I guessed it was nearly time for me to get back to the room: "I have to get ready to go up to Hepburn because I'm waiting on table and we have to be there at five-thirty."

It seemed taken for granted we would both join Kappa Kappa. Mel was saying he wasn't sure we could either of us afford to join a fraternity. "We don't have much money."

Howie asked if we sang, and we said we both did.

"Good. We need you. Be sure to come to the Music House at eight o'clock Wednesday night. It's just over from Painter on the way to the Chateau. I'm in charge of auditions. We will be glad to have two musicians. For sure, now. You come. I guarantee we can take you."

Then we had a little more talk. They wanted to know if we were already pledged, and Mel said, "No, this is our first visit to a fraternity."

"Well, consider this your home, both of you. Don't worry about money. We can take you as provisional. Consider this house yours. You can come and go as a member. Come back here to see us tomorrow night, and we'll make it official."

Mel said we'd consider it.

Howie asked me, "What do you say?"

"It sounds good to me."

And that is the way we left it.

-O-

Howie told us pledging would start Monday at 7:30, but because of waiting on table and cleaning up afterward -- Mel waiting for me -- we didn't arrive at the Kappa Kappa House until just after 8:00. It was bedlam. The livingroom was crowded with strangers milling around. In corners there were pairs or three-

somes in earnest discussion. It was easy to pick out freshmen because we were all wearing blue beanies we had to buy after one of our Orientation Meetings following the talk by the Springfield coach Monday morning.

Howie was in deep palaver with a freshman, but caught sight of us and threw up his arm and called, "Mel! Lyle! I'll be with you. Make yourselves at home."

There was no place to sit so we backed into a corner beside the piano and waited. Nobody paid any attention.

After fifteen or twenty minutes, Howie came and shook hands. "It's always like this pledge night. I've got a solid booking waiting to see me. I'm glad we got together yesterday. Tell you what. You just help yourself to cookies and punch and have a good time. I'll see you both Wednesday night at Glee Club auditions. I've got everything lined up for you there. Count on it."

He squeezed my arm and hurried away.

I said to Mel, "I thought we were going to have to sign something."

We had two glasses each of punch and some raisin cookies and left.

-O-

Outside we decided to look in on just one of the other houses listed for Monday night. It turned out that only the small houses were on our list for Monday. The big houses on Fraternity Row were left for Tuesday. We asked directions and turned toward Main Street.

Mel said, "I'm not going to sign anything."

I agreed.

Mel said, "They have their pledges picked ahead of time."

We looked at a house across the street. It was plain colonial up an incline on a square of lawn with two giant shade maples arched over it. Nobody was going in or coming out, but we could hear a buzz from the open door. We decided to give up and go back to the dorm, but instead went up the small flight of steps and along a strip of sidewalk to the door. Inside, in a crowded corridor, to our surprise we recognized Arthur Brundidge and Red Page, two Painter Hall freshmen. They came over to us. Arthur said he was an English major like me. He asked, "Have you pledged any where? I've just pledged here."

An upperclassman looked at him approvingly and started toward us but was detained. Red had also decided to go Beta Kappa. They introduced us to

the upperclassman who started toward us before, and who now reappeared, beaming. I forgot his name as soon as I heard it.

He said, "The Glazier brothers. We've been talking about you."

He put an arm about each of us and propelled us into a large room at the right of the front door. He asked if we had signed a pledge anywhere, and we told him No. We told him we hadn't much money and doubted if we could join. He said that needn't be an obstacle -- we could pledge and join later.

"Excuse me just a minute. Have to run an errand. Will be back directly. Stay right here."

When he came back, we found he knew a lot about us -- our high school records and the fact we had been both class president, and that Mel played baseball and basketball, and that I was waiting on table, and that we both roomed in Painter.

"Brundidge and Page have just pledged, and we like the looks of you."

Then he said, "There's someone wants to meet you. Follow me."

Talking to everybody as if he knew them all and was on good terms with them, he pushed through the crowd in the hall across to another room almost an exact copy of the first, another large square room with a fireplace on the inside wall. A tall, friendly man standing in front of the fireplace, extended his hand even before introductions were finished: "Mel and Lyle Glazier! I've been waiting to meet you."

Before hurrying away, our usher remarked that this was (and again I lost the name almost before I heard it) the president of Beta Kappa. This important person called over a couple more upperclassmen, "I want you to meet the Glaziers."

"Are you twins?"

Mel said, "No."

I say we are two years apart.

"You could have fooled me. You look like peas in a pod." He became busy calling over all the upperclassmen in sight and introducing them. Somebody came in and whispered to him, and he said, "Be with you in just a minute."

When he came back he talked about Beta Kappa, what a good bunch of fellows they were, and they were getting a bang up selection of pledges. "You

know," he said, "it's important to have some place where you can come and have friends and can come to parties and dances. Somebody who knows you and is interested in you and can help you get ahead and be somebody on campus."

Melvin was holding back, but I began to be really interested. I liked this house better than Kappa Kappa if anything, and you would have thought over there tonight they were too busy to care whether or not we stuck around.

"Tell you what. I'll see whether our pledging chairman can see you. Why don't you both go in and have a word with him? I want him to meet you."

He was gone a minute and then ushered us down the hall to the kitchen where three men were sitting at the table. They all stopped talking and looked up as we entered. The chairman was obviously the relaxed and friendly one who led the talking. He had taken off his coat and was in shirt sleeves. They didn't try to push anything on us. They were talking among themselves, as if we were one of them, about what a good bunch of freshmen had come to campus this year.

The chairman remarked they'd been having a banner pledge night and had practically their full quota. "You don't mind, I hope if we just chat a while and shoot the breeze. With you, we don't feel we have to rest on ceremony."

They just sat there talking among themselves, comparing experience. This one was on the staff of the Campus where they were looking for a few good men. "People who can really write are always scarce."

Another one said he had been talking to Professor Goodrich, who was staging a group of one-act plays and would be casting this coming week. "Trouble is so many of our actors graduated, we are going to have to replace them from somewhere."

They had high hopes for debating. "Professor Cook, the new American Literature professor, has agreed to coach the team. I heard last night. He was a Rhodes Scholar, you know, Midd grad, and has come back to fill in in place of Wilfred Davison." Another asked, "What are prospects for cross country?"

"Well, with Burt Perrin captain of varsity, we ought to get some pledges active on the freshman team. That is one captaincy we can hold for the house. Of course, Burt has another year to go after this year, but then there will be a real opening."

By now, they've had us pull up chairs and while keeping this chatter going, were letting us listen in on their inside dope. Actually, I was interested in acting, and writing, and I wanted to try out for some team. Cross country might be just right for me. I would have to be careful not to spread myself too thin. If I were in the Glee Club, I shouldn't take on too much, but cross country would be just right. It might excuse me from freshman gym. I had to exercise somewhere.

They offered us cigarettes, but neither of us smoked.

"Wish I didn't," the chairman said. "It's costing me money, and it's not improving my health. I'm trying to cut back to a pack a day. Take my advice and don't start."

I thought to myself, "Fat chance. I wouldn't have money enough to buy a pack a month say nothing about a pack a day."

The chairman lit another cigarette and yawned and stretched. "Time to get back to business. Well, Mel and Lyle, we aren't going to put on the heat, but from what we hear, you are exactly right for Beta Kappa and we think we'd be right for you. What do you say?"

Mel said, "I don't think I can afford to join."

"Well, what about you, Lyle?"

I didn't know what to say. I liked what I heard about Beta Kappa, and I especially liked the chairman. He seemed so decent and easy going and on top of things, and I particularly liked the way he hadn't made any attempt to influence our choice.

He sensed my indecision. "Tell you, you both stick around a half hour and think it over. We have a couple of others to talk to, and then we'll get back to you. Stick around, have some cookies and punch. That's fair enough, isn't it?"

We shook hands all around and went back to the first room where the punch bowl was. We were already swimming in punch. We had a couple more cookies.

Mel said, "I'm not going to sign anything. I like Kappa Kappa."

I said, "I think I like Beta Kappa."

Mel threw up his hands. "Where will you get the money?"

"He said if we pledge we don't have to become members right away."

The more I thought about it, the better it seemed to tell them I couldn't join but would keep them in mind the same way I was keeping Kappa Kappa in mind.

I liked Howie Stone and wanted him for my friend. He had practically promised to get us both in the Glee Club.

When the house president came back and said they could see us now in the kitchen, Mel said he had made up his mind not to join anywhere. I went along to the kitchen and said, "I'm like my brother, not able to join now, but I do like Beta Kappa. I would prefer to hold off pledging anywhere for now."

The chairman said, "That's your decision to make, but there are distinct advantages to pledging even if you can't join at the moment."

He kept on in that vein, and I got worked up and first thing I knew I signed on. They really slapped me on the back after I signed their paper. They took me around to the members and introduced their new pledge, nobody emphasizing the provisional hitch that I was not going to join right away.

Mel and I were very quiet on the way home. We decided we'd had enough of rushing and would stay home Tuesday and not bother to look in on fraternity row. When Ken Dodd dropped in to invite us down to the Kappa Kappa House, Mel went with him but I didn't.

-O-

Wednesday evening at eight, Mel and I were in line on the staircase waiting for auditions at the Music House. In a few minutes Howie showed up, threading his way up to the rehearsal room. When I called out to him, "Hi, Howie!" he didn't seem to recognize me. Melvin was called ahead of me, and came back almost at once. He got in, nothing to it. I had to wait a long time. I was getting anxious by the time I could go upstairs. I was tight in the throat and realized I wasn't singing well. Howie didn't say a word, but the decision went against me. I could try again next year.

I wasn't really sorry I pledged Beta Kappa, but I wasn't jumping for joy. At the end of the week when I went down for the pledging ceremony, they announced hazing plans, and seemed lukewarm to my plan to delay full membership. I learned that the pledge committee chairman whom I admired so much was last year's house president. He got a job teaching in Wilmington and had gone back to his high school.

-O-

Our rooms were on the third floor and showers were in the basement. Saturday afternoon after I came back from Beta Kappa, Mel had just come back

from Kappa Kappa. He changed into his robe and grabbed a towel and soap and went downstairs. When he came up from showering, he started to read, then, looking across at me, said, "Lyle, I left my towel down in the basement."

I paid no attention. In a few minutes, he said a bit louder, "Lyle, I left my towel in the basement!"

I didn't budge. After a few minutes he laid down his book and said firmly, "LYLE, I TOLD YOU TWICE I LEFT MY TOWEL IN THE BASEMENT!"

I swung my chair back-to him. In a few minutes he got up, went out, leaving the door open, and in due time returned and hung his wet towel on a clothes hanger in the closet.

Chapter Eighteen

Chapel

Sunday & daily

President Moody's sermon for our first Sunday chapel was on the BIBLE as History and Symbol. Coming from the son of the great Evangelist, the topic and its development were exactly what I needed to hear. In Northfield Farms I had been more and more irked by the fundamentalist piety of speakers who came from Northfield to give revivalist sermons. Week after week we walked the sawdust trail and offered our souls to Jesus. Although I loved my neighbor and thought Jesus the purest spirit I ever heard of, I didn't like the implication that if you gave your soul to Jesus, you could get into Heaven without doing anything about the poverty of families like ours, where sensitive and intelligent people like Mom and Pop wasted away trying to keep body and soul together. I began to tremble inside to have wellfed and welldressed speakers tell us that our lives were in the hands of a benevolent God who knew better than we that suffering

was a means of grace. I could be carried away by the hymn: "He who watches the flight of the songbird over mountain and desert and wild, He who watches the flight of the songbird will care for the soul of his child." It was such lovely music and the imagery so pretty, but how could God be so blind to the waste of human lives? My year in the Millers Falls Tool Shop scared me because I had been afraid I was caught in the same trap that gripped Pop and Mom and George Lee and Old Disky.

Now here was President Moody looking at the Holy Book as the work of fallible human beings, not the Voice of Jehovah from somewhere out there in space, a great brain looking down on us and doing everything for our good whether we liked it or not. If as President Moody was saying the BIBLE was the work of people dictating history according to their belief, was it possible that we ought to accept Jesus as our Savior by following his example? This way might we not learn that salvation was not in asking Him to purge us from sin, but to rescue us from poverty that resulted from perfectly good people not being wise enough to divide the riches of the world so that everybody had his share?

This may not be literally what President Moody said, but from what he said about History and Symbol, it was what I took away from what he said. Suddenly all my unformulated objections to the revival sermons seemed to fall into place, and I thought I knew what I was going to believe.

-O-

The next day we had our first daily chapel. It was not very religious except for a reading from scripture and a couple of hymns by the choir. Chiefly we had announcements of activities scheduled for the week, and after that Prexy spoke to the whole student body on the college as a community of scholars. For the first time I realized that I was really in college about to attend classes and take some of the wonderful courses I read about in the catalogue. Something inside me seemed to swell as if I was going to bust out all over. I looked around and felt part of this great crowd of students, men on one side of the aisle, women on the other. If I were back home, right now I would be in Millers Falls down at the tool shop, probably hearing George Lee's story about the grapefruit and the life savers or looking over at Old Disky grinding off rough edges from castings or maybe helping Pop load another shipping of steel rods onto a trolley. I pulled

myself back in time to realize Prexy had changed his subject as well as his tone of voice. I caught him in mid sentence:

"...don't need to carry on that Neanderthal tradition any longer. I know you were hazed by the sophomores last year when you came out of first chapel. The time for such nonsense is past. You notice I am carrying Gamaliel Painter's cane as I always do on important occasions. In my opinion no occasion is more important than the official beginning of college in the fall. It's a time to cast off outworn traditions and adopt the new. Middlebury College will no longer tolerate the hazing of freshmen after first chapel. As always, I will lead the recession, and I warn you, any sophomore not heeding my warning will feel the weight of Gamaliel Painter's cane."

In a different voice, he introduced Professor Vernon C. Harrington, an old man who led us in a prayer that seemed to go on forever. Then we all rose and sang "Onward, Christian Soldiers," with the choir marching out followed by Prexy and Professor Harrington, followed by faculty, and then seniors, and then juniors and then sophomores, and finally it was the turn of freshman women, and then us freshman men, who'd been told not to forget to put on our blue beanies as we went out the door.

We looked ahead down the front steps to the sophomore men lined up among saplings on both sides of the steep sidewalk leading down to Old Chapel Row.

As the first of us men started down the steps, the sophomore men crowded in from the edges and snatched at our beanies, and Prexy turned around and came up at us flailing his cane, with the sophomores falling back. Our front ranks, pushed on by those behind and crowded into a narrow space by the sophomores, felt the weight of the cudgel on our heads, on our defending forearms, or wherever the weapon happened to strike.

-O-

After you had your own dinner, you laid your table with silver and napkins and tumblers, and saw to it there were two full pitchers, one of water, the other of milk at each end of the table. You brought out two plates of butter, and two platters of sliced bread. You took your starched white jacket from its hook, put it on, got your tray, and stood in line. By dumb waiter the food came in kettles from the kitchen in the basement to the serving room, where Cookie and his wife were

upstairs to dish it onto a stack of hot plates. He was middle-aged, chunky, with a pot belly from sampling his food. His wife was medium height, small build, bad-complexioned, and anxious. Luke Bowles was behind the counter, too, lugging the plates from the long shelf running under the back windows to the counter where Cookie could have a new one under his hand as soon as a waiter grabbed a full one and loaded it onto his tray. Six to eight full plates (depending on today's menu) made all you could carry. If you were small you bent down and got your right shoulder under the load with your elbow bent but supporting and your hand flat on the bottom of the tray and well out, but not too far toward the edge away from you. Then you straightened up letting your whole body bear the weight. You got your left shoulder against the door to catch it when it snapped back, and pushed it open ahead of you as you staggered through. I learned quick not to bend my knees but to stand straight on the way to my table, where I did bend my knees to lower the tray onto its stand without tipping it. You reminded yourself not to take away all the plates from one side of the tray without evening it out on the other. With a full plate in each hand, I edged along one side of the table, serving two students at a time, from the right or the left as the case might be. You had to be careful not to collide with the waiter serving the next table. Your students would hush their talking and start shoveling in food as soon as they got served. After the first tray was empty, I scurried back to the serving room trying to be early in line again so as not to keep the other six students waiting so long that the first ones had already finished their dinner by the time I got back with the second tray. Then you scurried back and got in line for desserts. I was pretty good at it, but had to be on guard not to let the big fellows shove me aside.

There was a weekly list posted for filling and operating and emptying the dishwasher as dirty dishes came back. You loaded the washer top and bottom, closed the door, turned on the water, turned up the heat, and at the right time turned off the hot water and turned on the hot air, so they were dry and ready to stack as they came from the washer.

The chief problem was after lunch, when all the big fellows taking lab ran out of the dining room as soon as they served and cleared. After a week when Billy Sandwich from Peacham and I were the only ones on duty because we were not taking Chemistry, Miss Bowles was standing at the exit stopping the

runaways, and sending them back. She told them emphatically that the list was for them, too, and that Glazier and Sandwich had been told no longer to man the dishwasher unless their names were on the list for that meal.

Waiting on table made me nervous but I tried not to show it. I had a belittling feeling that because I was a waiter I had to bow and scrape and talk in a hushed voice, and ask, "Would you like some more butter?" or "Can I pass you the milk pitcher?" instead of letting them take care of themselves. Mel told me that one of the sophomores who ate at the commons because he hadn't joined a fraternity told him I was the most considerate waiter in the whole bunch because I took care that everybody was served. Some of the athletes had already been taken for freshman football, and a few of them were becoming slapdash and important.

Chapter Nineteen

Sept. 1929

Transitions

In spite of my all-A record at Northfield High, I failed the qualifying exam for French 101, Language and Composition. I must take Beginner's French that met for two hours five times a week. Two years ago in that rush toward summer vacation, after Miss Jones rode with us on the schoolbus, she and I had no further conversation. I got a good grade in French, but for Fall dropped the language and signed up for Miss Lawley's Business Arithmetic, in which I did so well that one Friday afternoon assembly Principal Lawley announced it had never happened before, but Lyle Glazier got a perfect grade of one hundred for the entire marking period. But I missed out on a third year of French.

-O-

On our first Monday after classes began, Professor Dame, the quiet, shy teacher of Latin, gave us a spot test, corrected in class while we worked on Wednesday's assignment. I was dismayed to find I had D. I had never in my life got such a grade. After supper I talked it over with my new friend Rollin Campbell and he agreed to go with me to talk to Mr. Dame. We had to walk all the way downtown, then uphill past Middlebury Inn, and south on Rutland Street in the direction we came from when driving from home. I was so distracted I hardly noticed how far it was, probably more than a quarter mile south of the Inn, on the right side of the street, a small, two story white house set back from the sidewalk. The landlady called upstairs, and we heard the professor inviting us to come up.

I told him I thought I should drop Latin.

He asked about my background and I told him I had four years, including Caesar, Virgil, and Cicero. "But I've worked in a factory for a year, so it's been a year since I looked at a Latin book."

"Did you have good teaching?"

"We had a wonderful teacher for two years. She used to take a trip to the Mediterranean by freighter summers and came back full of interesting things. I was supposed to be a good student. Junior I got high grades also with Miss Lawley who taught Virgil. Seniors had Cicero. We had Miss Voss, a new teacher."

"Tell me about Miss Lawley."

"She taught math and science."

"Was she a good teacher?"

"She was a whizz in math and science."

Professor Dame smiled. "How was she with Virgil?"

"Well, she had never taught Latin. I don't think she liked to. She always had a translation in front of her. She read from it. She taught us scansion."

"And Miss Voss?"

"She said Cicero is hard. She said nobody can tell exactly what he meant sometimes."

"Did you say you have worked in a factory?"

"Last year."

"Did you learn from it?"

"Well, I didn't learn Latin."

He mused. "I never worked in a factory. I suppose it could be...educational."

I thought about Old Disky and George Lee. "You don't have to read any books."

"I suppose not."

He leaned back against his chair. "You've had four years of Latin. That's more than some of your classmates. I think you ought not to drop out. Try it a little longer and see if it doesn't begin to come back."

A nice man, he was not in a hurry. He told us about his brother's family.

"He has summer cottages to rent, Over on the coast of Maine. I spend my summers there. He has a wife and a boy and a girl."

Out on the street, Rollin asked if I've made up my mind. I said, "Yes."

"Are you going to stick it out?"

"Yes."

It was a long walk back to campus.

-O-

I felt good about English. My teacher was Dr. Beers, who was chairman. Our first assignment was to memorize the first eighteen lines of the Canterbury Tales. That was easy because we'd had to do that after the first meeting of senior English back in Northfield. Elizabeth Howard, our new teacher that year

majored in English at Middlebury under Dr. Beers, and gave us that very same assignment.

When I got off the bus the next day I had memorized the whole eighteen lines. I was not sure of some of the pronunciation, but I had the words down pat. A bunch of seniors, including Fay Smith and two new students, Lyle Amsden and Vera Wright, were waiting for me. They said everybody was boycotting the assignment and they wanted me to agree.

"We can't make hide nor hair out of it," Lyle said. He was older than we were, from over across the River in West Northfield. Vera was the new doctor's daughter, just moved from Wilmington, Vermont.

I didn't say yes or no, but when class was called to order, and they made their objection, I kept my mouth shut. Miss Howard looked around the class as if looking for a volunteer, and when nobody put a hand up, she said, "Well, we'll learn it together." She put us through the whole memorization and made it seem fun. I never did get a chance to recite the lines till we had all learned them.

That first day of freshman English at Middlebury, when Dr. Beers recited the passage for us, it sounded familiar from two years ago. When I worked on it, it came back quickly. I thought it very musical. I tried to say it aloud to make sense of it as if it was my own language and had no trouble at all writing it out perfect when he tested us at the second meeting of the class.

Miss Howard was one of my great teachers. She was one of the reasons I liked English.

I got an A from Dr. Beers for my Chaucer paper, as well as for the next one interpreting a stanza of The Faerie Queene. We could write a paper or draw an illustration, and I did both, spending hours on a pen sketch of a hermit's hut peering out of a dark forest to illustrate "A little, lowly hermitage there was..."

A few days later meeting President Moody on a crosswalk near Painter, I was hailed. "Oh, Lyle, I asked Dr. Beers the other day if he has any budding writers in his freshman class, and he told me he has one, Lyle Glazier." It was a great boost to my morale.

-O-

In Beginner's French, I studied under Professor Ranty. He was a round-bellied Monsieur Poirier from Grenoble. He told us we couldn't speak a word of English in his class. He translated my name into Monsieur Vitrier. He made me

practice rolling my rs, beating imaginary drumsticks on an imaginary drum and rolling rrrrrr and making me repeat after him. It was a small class, where I made friends with Abraham Manell, who was a bellhop in the Middlebury Inn. We both liked Monsieur Ranty immensely.

-O-

A required course was Contemporary Civilization, a great lecture course for all freshmen with a young teacher, very shy, little fellow from Columbia. He told us the first day we would be introduced to the history of the earth and the universe --both the human part of it and the stars and galaxies that surround us. Because of the size of the class, the examinations would be true/false questions at midsemester and the end of each semester. We were given an outline and a great syllabus of suggested reading that looked interesting but formidable.

-O-

Besides Latin, French, English, and Contemporary Civilization, I had to take something in the sciences, and decided to take Calculus because I had always got top grades in math even though I did it by rote, not having a real feel for what it all meant. I found the homework slow going, as if I had lost the command over it I had before I left it for a year. It seemed to have gotten cold. My neighbor Harold Jillson from New Jersey got his problems solved in no time and offered to help me. I could have copied his answers, but he had no patience to watch me work out the problems, and I didn't want just to copy. I wouldn't learn anything if I did. So I labored for hours and the papers came back marked perfect and I began to feel confident.

At the end of two weeks we had a full hour progress exam, where I was doing all right till Professor Perkins took out his watch and announced we had another half hour, when I became frantic. I had two problems to go, and plenty of time for them, but I couldn't do anything. I got hotter and hotter. At the very close, when there was five minutes to go, I had gone crazy, and turned in the paper only half done right, the last part such a jumble he wouldn't even be able to see if I was on the right track even if I didn't have the right answer.

I didn't tell anybody, especially not Jillson, but I went to the next class expecting the worst. At the end of the hour, Professor Perkins gave back the exams, holding mine for last, and talking to me when the others were leaving.

He was a tall, skinny old man from northeast Vermont, his voice a twang that had gone the length of his nose.

"Glazier, you have done perfect homework. Your first two problems are solved perfectly, but you did nothing with the last two. Is there some explanation?"

"I was all right till you said there was only a half hour left, then I couldn't do anything."

"Humph! Come with me to my office."

He led me next door.

"You sit down at the table. I'm going to give you another examination. You can have an hour for it."

He pattered around his desk. I wasn't nervous. By the end of fifty minutes I was done and he corrected the paper on the spot. I got a hundred.

I worried a lot, and two weeks later when we had another trial exam, I went to pieces at the end of a half hour. He gave me another make up, and I got a hundred in it.

I decide that enough is enough. I had heard about a French philosopher named Coue, who came to the United State to try to cure people through thought persuasion and a motto that went "Every day in every way I am getting better and better."

I decided to try it, and after the second exam whenever I thought about it, a dozen times a day, I said to myself, "I'm not going to be nervous in my math examination." I said it over and over, resolving not to be nerved up about it, but just repeat the statement & believe it. I went into the midsemester cool as a cucumber. I didn't get nerved up, and the paper came back with a hundred.

Mr. Lewellyn R. Perkins never mentioned it, neither did I.

He might not be much to look at, but he was really somebody!

Chapter Twenty

Hometies, crosscountry,
and Christmas

A hundred and forty miles from Northfield Farms, we kept contact through dirty laundry even more than by letter. We had frequent short letters chiefly from Mom with brief notes about what was going on there at the Farms and the factory. Clayt was a freshman in High School, and Larry already in the fourth grade. I took for granted their loving concern, but I was too busy with schoolwork and waiting on table and cross country to pay much attention to what it must mean to have two less mouths to feed. Larry was doing well.

Clayt was having trouble with Miss Lawley, who expected him to be as docile as Mel and me, and he wasn't. This important news from home hardly registered, I was so wholly involved in Middlebury.

Mel and I both had rectangular laundry mailers -- cardboard boxes enclosed in woven canvas covers with straps to buckle the package - about 18 by 24 inches, and 6 inches deep. On top was an address slot inset under an isinglass cover, containing a two-way invertible card, with our address on one side and the folks's on the other. Our plan was for each of us to make up a parcel every week and ship it home parcel post for washing and ironing. What actually happened was we forget or ignored the schedule, and after two weeks, when we ran out of clean socks or clean shirts, both cram-packed a single package and waited somewhat anxiously for it to come back, painstakingly laundered with almost always a box of filled cookies or doughnuts. These packets from home were eagerly anticipated by both us and our neighbors.

In October the stockmarket crashed, and investors jumped from 40th story windows on Wall Street. We heard about classmates losing their allowances because of frozen bank accounts, but we had no allowances to lose: tuition paid, Mel and I weathered this crisis with scarcely a ripple of consciousness.

-O-

I went out for cross country where Burt Perrin, captain of varsity, was a member of Beta Kappa, a junior. We freshmen practiced with the varsity. Coach Brown gave us a short pep talk the first day, and we ran out toward Shoreham past the cemetery where Gamaliel Painter was buried. The first day we were issued running shoes, running shorts, jumpers, jockstraps, and a sweatsuit that we didn't yet need in warm, late September.

I had done a lot of running in my life but never with any coaching. Talking to us freshmen, Coach Brown advised us to stop smoking if we smoked, to keep regular hours, get plenty of sleep, and to come out for practice every day. Above, all, he told us to keep our eyes on the varsity and follow their example.

"The one specific advice I can give you is to loosen up. Don't carry your arms up against your chest. Let your arms fall naturally to your side. Especially going uphill. You will be running against yourself if you draw up your arms and tighten your chest muscles. When you go downhill let your momentum carry you. Try not to pound the roadbed. Be light on your feet. That's about all I can tell you. Keep your eye on Burt Perrin, if you can keep him in sight."

Burt kept himself to himself. Not standoffish, just not bossing anybody.

I heard talk about "getting a second wind." It was supposed to happen somewhere about half through a race. "When you feel as if you can't go another step, suddenly you catch your second wind." I never got my second wind any time during any practice or any race that first year. We had one principal race and that was a home race against UVM, and we got clobbered. It was six miles - along South Street about two miles to the cider mill cross road, then north two miles to the West road, then two miles back to campus, ending with a long pull up hill, then past the girls' dormitories, a coast down the incline to Old Chapel Road. then a couple hundred yards on a level to the finish line in front of McCullough Gym. I finished, even though I was staggering to the finish line five to six minutes after the race was over.

I really enjoyed running -- especially on a long level stretch of dirt road, or, surprisingly, going uphill if I remembered to let my arms drop and just dig into the grade without getting tight. Going downhill was in some ways harder. You could lose control, and find your legs flinging out ahead of you as if taking off by themselves. And on a paved road there could be quite a shock when harsh contact with the road traveled up your leg from your heel to muscles in your hip. You could cushion this if you tipped down your ankle to make contact with the ball of your foot. But doing this, you had to be careful not to twist your ankle and put yourself out of the race.

Two things especially registered in my mind from that first year. The first time we were given a schedule to go downtown to Dr. Swanson for a physical we were all a bit worried about giving a sample of urine. I tanked up to be sure I'd have ample supply. Bob Uhlrich told us later he drank so much water that when the Doc tested his muscle by giving him a punch in the belly, he let fly with a stream that caught the Doc in the eye.

Another thing. About the second or third practice, when we were in the locker room, Coach Brown was there preparing the varsity for their first meet. He came over to us and talked to us, and it seemed to me he was eyeing me in the pelvic region. I hid the fact that I didn't have much to boast about because of all that time I had wasted myself with a wet dream every night. The coach wasn't nosy but I caught him, I thought, throwing a private eye my way. I drew my legs together, and pulled up my pants, and if he noticed anything he didn't say so.

-O-

After our midsemester exams, when grades were in, the freshman waiters were surveyed by Al Henry, our headwaiter, who had collected our grades from the registrar or dean. We turned out to have done rather well. High honors went to Red Yeomans, freshman football and chemistry major. He had mostly A's. Clark Corliss, another football player, had done nearly as well. Bud Newman, manager of football, also had very high scores, as did his roommate, Gordie Ide, pre-med. Phil Carpenter, also a science major, was close to the top of the heap. I began to think there was something about science that made top grades easier to justify, perhaps because results were more measurable than in History, English, and the social sciences. The quiet little fellow Peter Sandwich from Peacham, had done well.

I surprised them because as a bachelor of arts major, I had an A in math. It seemed incredible to some that, poaching in their field, I had brought in such a trophy. In fact, with A's in French and math, and B in English and Contemporary Civilization, my C in Latin was hardly noticed. I told nobody, not even Mel of the two failing Math examinations, covered over by make-ups. Throughout that episode, my scarcely-thought-out strategy was to accent the positive by hardly acknowledging I came so close to ruin. If it hadn't been for the extraordinary oversight of Professor Perkins, I could have easily gone down the drain in that course, and my whole emotional balance gone, too. I learned that Mr. Perkins was a close friend of President Moody, who remarked to me one day that I had a friend in my math professor. I didn't intend to let him down by getting worried again. In fact, I put the whole business so out of my mind that I dwelt on it no longer.

-O-

That Christmas when I went home, I went to the schoolhouse on Sunday where we had an evangelical sermon by Mrs. W. R. Moody. She gave us the heart of the Moody message: the road to Salvation is through the Heart, not the Mind. "Accept Jesus in your heart. Open your heart to Him. It's so easy to do."

In the popcorn service that followed that message, we were once more invited, rather exhorted, to walk the sawdust trail. Then the children who didn't go up front were invited to testify by "raising hands."

She had her eye on us in the back row, and as soon as the service was over she marched to where I stood.

"Don't you believe in Jesus?"

I said I thought it wrong to ask little children to testify to something they weren't old enough to understand.

"Have you given your heart to Jesus?"

I didn't reply.

She said, "Jesus makes his call through the heart not the mind."

She was richly dressed and important. I didn't say anything more. She gave a ferreting, searching look and said, "I will pray for you," and went back to confer with Mrs. Gilbert. She didn't stop to talk with Pop and Mom.

Back on campus a few weeks later, President Moody hailed me as I came down from Hepburn to Painter.

"I've just come from a visit back home. My sister-in-law took me to task. She asked me if I know that Middlebury teaches atheism to its students."

When I didn't know what to say, he said, "She's a Tartar, isn't she?"

He went on his way whistling across toward his office in Old Chapel.

Chapter Twenty-One

1930 spring semester

Easter

Rollin Campbell has come in to discuss a writing assignment for Beers on Ode: Intimations of Immortality. I decided to postpone writing my back papers and get to work on this new one due next week. I was in awe of the poem, but having some trouble with it. A word like intimations didn't register for me, it was not in my vocabulary. Rawl understood the poem better than I; in fact, he seemed to have an instinct for it. I liked its majesty. It had a swing that appealed to my sense of rhythm, and what Wordsworth's talking about reminded me of an experience I had as a boy when I walked into a birch grove and for the first time felt a sense of myself as a person inhabiting a world that seemed to fit me hand in glove. It could be called a religious experience but it had nothing to do with born again Christianity, dominated in Northfield by D. L. Moody, and in North

Leverett by a series of tent camp-meeting evangelists who came to New England from Scotland.

I really didn't know enough about my belief or about Rollin's to confide in him the root of my problem, but I felt that the language in the poem was probably closer to his belief than to mine... Yet I had the feeling that there was a rebelliousness in Wordsworth that made him more comfortable in the woods than in church though I couldn't be sure. Words like "soul" and "God" seemed to communicate something different to him than to me. I didn't believe in any great overseeing intelligence out there in space, and I wished I could say for sure that that was not what Wordsworth intended, but what did he intend?

Anyway, Rollin and I chewed the rag in the presence of those great cadences shielding a meaning about which I for one didn't have more than an inkling, but was trying to discover what they meant:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting,
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting
And cometh from afar
Not in entire forgetfulness
And not in utter nakedness
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God who is our home...

I wanted to print those rhythms, those images, on my mind so that years from now they would come back to me without my looking in a book to be prompted. But what did they mean?

Rawl seemed surer than I. There was a distance between him and me and at the same time a closeness, as if we were admiring the same words and getting meanings equally significant but not the same. Rawl had a good deal to say of the next part about

Shades of the prison house begin to close
Upon the growing boy.

I had some feeling for that, yet I would say that for myself they didn't describe my life, which was more like a new life suddenly springing out of a cocoon. Back there in Millers Falls Tool Shop I was not trailing any clouds of

glory as I was that morning when I was nine years old and walked into the birch grove. I lost the "clouds of glory" in the stockroom, and if I were ever to get them back, it would be Middlebury that opened the cocoon and brought to light my birthright. I couldn't tell any of this to Rollin, and I was too ignorant to put it into a paper for Dr. Beers. Wordsworth's poem was more sublime. That business about the "still, sad music of humanity" showed the power of true feeling. I was thinking of Pop and Mom and how Wordsworth described what happened to Pop.

Up there on Northfield Mountain when he used to bring Mom wildflowers, he was a dreamer. Even though he was getting deeper and deeper absorbed in the struggle to support a growing family, he carried his dream with him:

The youth, who daily from the east
Must travel, still is nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended

Working on the section gang, and in the Tool Factory, he lost the vision:

At length the man perceives it die away
And fade into the light of common day.

I was thinking Mom hadn't lost the vision, but she lost the opportunity to grasp it and was trying to pass it on to her boys. I wanted my life to be an opening out and out and out until it never stopped expanding till I stopped. And then where did it go?

I didn't know about Rawl, but I knew that most of what I was thinking I couldn't find words for. We talked late.

-0-

In late winter, putting President Moody's sermon together with what I was learning about the nature of our world and our universe in the course in Contemporary Civilization, I wrote an entry for a competition for an essay on "The World Does not Owe me a Living." Whoever wrote the best essay would win a prize of a thousand dollars. I didn't mention President Moody or his sermon but based my argument on my dawning belief that anyone knowing the history of evolution should reach the conclusion that our mission in life ought to be to create a human society where everybody will work for the common good. If

people couldn't do it of themselves, nobody out there in space would do it for them. In that way, the world did not owe me a living: I had to plot my own course.

I showed my essay to the wisest student I had met, a junior named Hiram Crommett, a dried up apple of a genius from Way Down East in Maine. He read it and took me with him to show it to Ferd Mann, a writer for the Middlebury Campus. Ferd knew everything. I stayed while he read. He seemed to become more and more complacently amused, and finally remarked, "Well, this is certainly something. ... From the mouthes of Babes... This won't win you the prize, but I sure hope you will submit it."

When the prize for 1929-30 went to Reamer Kline, son of a Middlebury History professor, I was disappointed but somewhat prepared by what I heard from Hiram and Ferd.

-O-

Easter vacation, Mel went on the main glee club trip of the year to New York City and on the way back would strike out for home from Albany.

The day before I started home from Middlebury, I ran into Aaron Newton on campus. A 1929 graduate of Northfield High, he was in college because his uncle Dr. Newton had died, leaving him money for pre-med and medical school. To cut expenses for this long haul, Aaron had decided to transfer next year to University of Massachusetts in Amherst where Massachusetts residents have free tuition. We agreed to hitch hike to Northfield together.

Thumbing together, we had fair but slow luck to Brattleboro, but no luck at all the rest of the way. It was past ten o'clock when we stopped in Brat for a sandwich and from there walked every step of the way to Hinsdale, then every step of the way to Northfield. By this time we had become confidential, and Aaron brought up Mr. Skillings and asked if he ever "approached" me. I said he didn't.

"You're lucky. He was my idol. I thought he was wonderful, the best thing ever happened to Northfield. One afternoon right after school, he catches me as I'm leaving the home room, and asks if I have time to help him bring down something from the attic. I don't even know there is an attic. We go up through a door just outside the home room. It's a great open space up there under the rafters. He goes ahead to a window looking out over the playground. I am

looking down thinking how much he has done for us. All his coaching and everything. He stands there beside me, and puts his arm around my shoulder. We look down together. Then he gets passionate."

-O-

After New Years, Mel and I both hitched back to Middlebury, separating to make it more attractive for a driver to pick one of us up. Somewhere north of Brattleboro, I fell in with Gordon Sprague of Greenfield, who almost immediately had the good fortune to run after a slowed-down car and jump in with a driver who would take only one of us. Jealously watching the disappearing tail light bearing him away, I limped along with a blistered heel, lugging my bag, eye peeled and thumb cocked for every car approaching from the south.

A couple days later, I learned that Gordon's traveling salesman put him up overnight, with dinner and breakfast in a Rutland hotel, and carried him on to Middlebury next day. I had no such luck. True, with many short hops, I arrived on campus ahead of Gordie, but I envied his comradeship with the salesman.

When I did get a ride, I let the driver know I was a Middlebury student, a fact that most drivers received with indifference. A few showed interest but not enough to go out of a their way to carry me an extra mile. I was not disheartened, because I knew where I was headed, and Middlebury was infinitely better than any place I'd ever before been in or dreamed of.

Twenty-Two

June 1930 Chapter
Middlebury Inn.

Mel came back from Easter glee club trip to New York City, reporting that Tony Brackett (Mel had been coaching him in Math) took him to meet Rudy Valee and listen to his sensational band. Rudy was becoming the Number One band leader in the country. Tony grew up in the same Down East Maine town and knew Rudy before he went to the University of Maine and learned the Stein Song that made him famous.

-O-

At Middlebury I had a sort of divided feeling. I didn't have any money, but with tuition, room, and board paid for, I could get along without throwaway cash. I stayed away from Saturday night dances at the Gym because, besides the dollar admission, you had to entertain your coed partner afterwards, and I didn't have a cent for the dog cart or Calvi's ice cream parlor, to say nothing about the coffee shop at the Inn, which was way beyond my reach. I walked past sometimes in the evening after I finished waiting on table. When I heard the chatter from the coffee shop and realized it was my classmates and their girlfriends, that glass-windowed enclosure seemed like a world floating in space. I wouldn't know how to behave there. I didn't have the clothes or the money to say nothing about their vocabulary. They were all slang and palaver.

-O-

I was scared the same way when I went to Mrs. Moody's. I was sent by the Dean's secretary to clean rugs. The President's wife was a little lady, soft voiced and gentle, and showed me the room where she had got the rugs rolled up for carrying out onto the back lawn. I had never known a room like their livingroom, with its sofas and soft chairs and the great painting of Dwight L. Moody, looking down from above the fireplace as if to ask whether I had given my soul to Jesus. He was a rich man, too, in his black suit and folded tie, and right hand tucked into his shirtfront. He looked like a business man. I

remembered the story about one of his sermons, where he was trying to illustrate the bounty of Jesus toward unbelievers.

The great evangelist stood there on the platform beside the podium looking exactly the way he looked down from the portrait.

He had beside the lectern an empty glass and a pitcher of water. Dramatically, he raised the pitcher and filled the glass half full. Then he said the half full glass of water was like the soul of the unbeliever. You could call the glass half empty or half full. The soul thirsting for righteousness had only to call on the Lord for redemption, and the Lord would fill his glass to the full. As he said this, he tipped the pitcher and let the water pour until it spilled over the top of the glass and splashed down the front of the lectern to the floor. I supposed if you were a rich businessman you could take this to mean the Lord would make you richer and richer. I heard this story in the Northfield Farms "upper chamber," as our upstairs Sunday evening meeting room was called by the evangelists coming down from Northfield to save our souls.

I wondered what it must have been to have Dwight L. Moody for a father. President Moody was not formidable at all, even seemed to like it when students called him "Prexy" to his face.

-O-

Almost at year end I had an excuse to wear my Tux at the Scullions' Ball, which was held in the Hepburn diningroom --cleared of tables and chairs. As a poor man's shindig, the Ball didn't require a corsage sent to your partner, and even a rainy night -- this year it wasn't -- if you had an umbrella, it was all right to walk your girl from her dormitory. You had a card to fill out for exchanging partners, and I filled out mine ahead of time with Hepburn waiters and upperclass Beta Kappa members who'd waited on table their freshman year.

I got an exchange with Carol McNeely, whose mother was a famous writer of western farm life. She died at the beginning of our freshman year, and Carol had to take a week off to go to the funeral in Iowa, or some state back in the midwest. It was very sad for her.

I liked dancing with Carol. She had become famous at the very beginning of the freshman year by publishing in the Saxonian a poem on Ninon de L'Enclos, the notorious French coquette way back practically in the Middle Ages. From that poem Carol had a reputation for being wild. She was effervescent,

and no matter who you were, she made you feel you were special. If you met her then met her again, she remembered you and stopped to talk. Middlebury was that kind of place, anyway. Everybody said Hello. But Carol made you feel she really meant it: her greeting to you was intense as if she and you were standing there confronting each other in a world all your own.

-O-

I had to begin to think about next year. I'd made it through this year with a scholarship and waiting on table for my board, and odd jobs like going down to the Moodies' and pounding dust out of their rugs on the back lawn, and I had that head start from the year in the toolshop. Once in a while Dean Hazeltine sent me to President Moody's office and I had twenty-five dollars from the President's Purse.

I went to the Treasurer to see if I could borrow some for next year, and he told me money would be tight, but if I could manage the bulk of it, I could probably get another scholarship and something in the way of a loan.

Abe Manell, in my French class, had been trying to persuade me to bellhop at the Inn. Though I probably couldn't go there to live the year round the way he did, he told me they would hire at least one extra bellhop for the tourist season and maybe two --from the beginning of June through the first week in September. I wrote home about it, and Mom wrote they hoped I could come home for the summer, but I didn't see how I could, not and come back in the fall.

-O-

My grades at the end of the year turned out pretty much what I expected. I got As in French and Math and Bs in English and Contemporary Civilization. My 79 in Latin from Professor Dame kept me off the Dean's list. After mentioning it to Rawl Campbell, I screwed up courage to go in to see Dean Hazeltine, to argue that if I got a low C first semester, I must have got some kind of B the second to average out.

He'd probably heard that argument before, for he came right back with his answer that the grade in May in a year course was the grade for the year.

-O-

Traveling from Painter down through the lower campus under the tall trees to keep an appointment to meet with the manager of the Inn, I passed through the residential area for faculty and staff west of village center. Crossing the

bridge and the store-lined main street, you could skip across to the common and onto the diagonal path leading by the Episcopal Church and up a steep grade at the top of which the Inn stood on a knoll above Burlington Street, a graceful, balanced brick facade, four and a half story. The west side looked over the business district and the faculty residential area to the distant upslope through lower campus to the buildings of Faculty Row dating back to the very beginning of the college, then beyond to another and steeper hill on whose crest rose marble-fronted Mead Chapel with its thin spire, and, to its left, the squat, massive bulk of Hepburn Hall, to its right the broad landscape of the Women's College at Middlebury.

A small flight of steps led to the entrance on the Inn's south front, facing a small, landscaped island in the middle of an oblong of roads carrying traffic from Rutland 35 miles south to an abrupt right angle turn west downhill past the Inn's entrance and then a sharp right turn toward Burlington 35 miles north. For travelers from the north, the road from Burlington coming in west of the Inn took a right angular turn uphill before swinging toward Rutland. The Inn faced, across the island, a wooded park of several acres surrounding the square colonial mansion of Gamaliel Painter, who, every freshman learned, "...founded Midd in eighteen naughty-naught" then dying providentially, "...gave his all by will to the College on the Hill."

Anyone going to the Inn climbed three or four steps, crossed a narrow unroofed patio, and entered from the traffic outside to the quiet of the spacious lounge. For the first time I proceeded to the long counter visible ahead on my right. Behind it, studying my approach, stood a tallish, thin, but big-framed clerk, with an expanding waistline and pleasant but vacant stare. He had been placing envelopes in pigeonholes in a wall of mailboxes behind the desk, but put down his handful.

"I'm Lyle Glazier. Abe Manell may have told you I would come to apply for a job bellhopping."

He picked up a phone, pushed a button, talked into the mouthpiece, and replacing it, turned back to me.

"You were in Abe's French class. He tells me you were a good student."

"He is a good student."

"Yes. We are proud of him."

He gave me a high sign. I turned to see coming down a long flight of stairs, a smartly dressed young man, distinctly collegiate, as if he might be a college senior or young faculty member.

We reached out his hand. "You are punctual. Let's go over here where we can talk."

He was as polite as if talking to a guest.

"Where are you from, Mr. Glazier."

"Northfield, Massachusetts."

"I've been there many times. My family once had a cottage on the Ridge."

"I lived six miles south in Northfield Farms."

"But you know the summer conference?"

"I have sung The Hallelujah Chorus there."

"Everybody has sung The Hallelujah Chorus. And so now you would like to learn the hotel business."

"I need a job for the summer."

"Can you do heavy lifting?"

"I can do hard work."

"We prefer college students like Abraham Manell. We are one of the Treadway Chain -- a Real New England Inn. Another of our hotels is the Williams Inn. If you come to us, you'll be working with William Lieson, a Williams student, who has worked in that inn during this school year. Our other bellboy is a next year Middlebury boy, Carl Seymour, who graduated from high school this year and will be a freshman at Middlebury. We pay a salary of \$10.00 a week and board and room. You'll get most of your pay in tips. You would be expected to start the first Tuesday in June to be here for Commencement and Alumni Weekend. Our busy season lasts through the first week in September. Are those dates possible?"

I told him they were.

"Naturally, I'm anxious to fill the position soon."

"I would like the job."

"That settles it. Dean Hazeltine recommends you. I will take you to our steward and you can sign the contract."

I was figuring in my head that \$10.00 a week for June, July and August and the first week in September would be at least \$120. I would have no

expenses. In all summer I could probably clear \$300. With the \$200 scholarship I've been promised I would be as well off as last year.

He took me back to the desk clerk, who took me around the end of the counter into a little cubbyhole of a room.

The steward was stocky, bad complexion, with a bulging forehead and a bitter expression as if he was stuck in his backwater and would like to be in the front office. He talked down to me. From a college student hobnobbing with the manager, I was suddenly a nonperson.

I signed the contract and an order for a uniform.

"Take the order to the tailor across the street from the men's clothing store on the north side of Main Street just before you cross the bridge. It's your responsibility to pick up the uniform before you report for work. At the very latest, be on hand by 10:30 the first Tuesday in June, ready to go on duty for the afternoon shift at one o'clock. You'll have meals in the helps' diningroom, and will sleep in the attic. The hotel furnishes a cot and bedding and housekeeping service from chambermaids."

He dismissed me with a wave of his hand.

-O-

I felt good about getting the job bellhopping, but the putdown by the steward destroyed me for the moment; I had to pull myself together. Back in Painter, I read in the Campus that Pud Fish, choir director, was looking for volunteers for the Baccalaureate service a week from Sunday. Since I would be working at the Inn, why not try for it? I had the good luck to find her in the chapel playing the organ. She stopped as I came down the aisle, and came to sit in the first row with me. A tall big-boned young woman, very outgoing, she didn't ask for an audition, was really interested when I told I played the piano for the choir for the evening services in Northfield Farms. I told her about my new job at the Inn and she congratulated me. We worked out a plan for me to be present for two rehearsals and the service on Baccalaureate Sunday. I was sure I could swap shifts with one of the other bellhops if there was a conflict. It felt good to be having this continuing relationship with the College.

In the evening, Art Brundidge dropped over to our room and offered me a copy of D. H. Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover smuggled in from Italy. Art didn't dare carry it home where his mother would be furious with him for spending

all that money on trash. I knew nothing about Lawrence. If I were alone I would have taken it, but Mel and Rawl Campbell were there, and I decided it would look bad if I took a book Brundidge was scared to carry home.

Mel and I signed up for the same room for next year, but had to move all our things to make way for summer school students. We carried our trunk down to the Beta Kappa House and put it in storage. Mel planned to spend summer at home. I had no idea how he hoped to get money to return in the fall, but he didn't seem the least worried. He knew all about my business, but told me practically nothing about his. He had worked for the Moodies all year, and I knew he would be would be driving Prexy and Mrs. Moody to Northfield for the summer conference at the Seminary, and so had a ride home.

-O-

My hitchhike home was a kind of celebration. I was riding a high from having got the job at the Inn. I got a lift to Rutland with a student who lived there, then caught a ride just south of the city with a young traveling salesman, headed for Boston on route 103 to Bellows Falls. I got a late start, so it was already evening. As we coasted along through the dark, I started whistling, not ordinarily a whistler, but tonight I was. In a break in my music, he said he could carry me all the way to Brattleboro or Greenfield, one or the other. I explained how he could save a few miles by cutting down through Hinsdale to Northfield and striking the Mohawk Trail just east of Millers Falls. I didn't bother to say that this way we would be passing through Northfield Farms right past our house. I continued with my crazy whistling, which didn't seem to bother him. He apparently thought of me as a carefree college student with a screw loose. In my emotional high, I -- ordinarily so concerned about making a good impression -- didn't care what he thought.

Somewhere east of Ludlow he suddenly braked and pulled over into a parking space: "I gotta water my horse."

I stayed in the car whistling. He was gone a long time. I could see him just at the edge of the trees, barely visible but always in sight. I began to wonder if I should join him. I wouldn't mind. I would in a minute if I thought he wanted me to, but I was afraid he wouldn't. Suppose I went there beside him and he thought me ridiculous? I was leery of going.

I was still whistling but out of tune. He came back, said nothing, started the motor and drove on. I stopped whistling. I decided that if he stopped again I would join him, but he seemed to have lost interest in me, and I began to be a little afraid of him. I didn't know what he had in mind. We rode through the dark not saying anything to each other.

Actually there was no trouble. Irritable, he followed my directions, -- to the left turn at the foot of Main Street in Brattleboro where we crossed the bridge into New Hampshire, and then he carried me all the way home, letting me out at the door.

-O-

I could see a light in the kitchen window, the kerosene bracket lamp above the kitchen table. I walked to the front door and eased it open until I could see Mom was sitting in a chair next to the stove, a smell of fresh doughnuts saturating the air. The doughnut kettle was on the front burner, steam from hot fat rising as Mom got up to turn the doughnuts.

I waited till she was done then pushed the door wide open, and she turned -- a little woman, only to my shoulder. I put down my bundle, and we stood there looking at each other.

"Lyle!"

"I got a ride all the way from Rutland."

"Come on in and put your things down and wait till I finish these doughnuts. I thought you might like some fresh ones."

Mom stood up to the table where the molding board was floury and covered with scraps of dough left over from her cuttings. She scraped the fragments together, collected them in a ball with one hand, floured the board with the other, dropped the ball in the middle, and with the rolling pin flattened it into a thin landscape, on which she automatically printed medallions, working so deftly that the edge of one medallion touched another and there was only a fragment of dough between them. She flattened her right arm bare to the elbow, and laid the flat cutouts from wrist to elbow and carried them to the steaming kettle where she dropped them one by one into boiling fat. Each dropped out of sight then came sputtering, white side up. By the time she had let slide the last, she was ready to start turning them with the fork. The second time they came up brown and crisp on top.

In a couple minutes, she turned them again, waited a few seconds then with fork through the hole in the center lifted them out one at a time into the agate bowl.

The few diamonded scraps left on the board she combined with a half dozen round balls left by the hole in the cutter, rolled them into flat oblongs, twisted them into curlicues, and dropped them, too, into the hot fat, and the second time they came up, they were browned into figure eights.

Pop came from the other room, his book laid flat on the diningroom table under the overhead lamp. He said foolishly, "I've been reading. What do you think of the lamp?"

The one over the dining room table was a newfangled mantle lamp like the ones Gramp and Gram had.

I said, "Isn't that something?" and went in to look at it. When I came back, Mom was turning the last doughnuts again. They were done. She took the long fork and lifted them into the dish with the others, and picking up the stovetop holder, turned up the handle of the flat, fat-encrusted kettle, and with both hands lifted the kettle onto the reservoir, finishing her work by scraping the mouldingboard with a spatula, and laying it away in the long drawer under the sink.

Pop was wearing long johns above his britches, and we shook hands as if we were strangers. He pulled out a chair for himself and Mom went to the closet for a tumbler, and into the entryway between kitchen and barn, where I heard a door open and shut. She came back with a bottle of milk.

I said, "Aren't we living in style!"

"We got an icebox. It's better than having to go to the spring."

Pop said, "Charlie Gilbert delivers ice twice a week."

They seemed apologetic explaining their extravagance. We sat at the table, and Mom poured me a tumbler of milk and pushed the doughnut dish toward me. Pop said, "I want one, too."

He got up and got two more tumblers and we all sat there, while I crunched the fatty edge of a doughnut.

I said, "Remember how we would hear the plate sliding over the top of the jar, and it would be Kenneth in there helping himself?"

Pop said, "Melvin took Clayt and Larry to the movies. I think he probly stopped by to pick up Pheenie."

Mom said, "Course he did."

We sat there musing. Mom moved the dish toward me and I had a second doughnut, so tired I could hardly keep my eyes open. I got up and stretched and yawned, and went over to the sink shelf and lighted me a carry lamp.

Mom said, "You sleep as late as you want."

From upstairs in the bedroom I could hear them getting ready for bed. In the night I woke and turned over when Mel crawled in. We turned our backs on each other. In a few minutes I could feel his warmth but didn't turn toward him as I did when we were children warming each other on a cold winter night.

-0-

On Sunday just before driving out to Gram and Gramp's, Marshall Hammond came to the front door and wanted me to go for a walk. He had never before done this. I went out into the yard and talked. I wanted to go with him but knew I couldn't. I told him perhaps I could come up to his house after we got back.

When I went in, Mom asked, "Did he want something?" and I said, "Kenneth told him I'm home. He came down to say hello." They'd swapped in the Dort for a Model A Ford. Mel drove with Clayt and me sitting in front with him, Clayt riding over the gear shift, and Larry -- ten years old going into fifth grade -- sitting in back with Mom and Pop. They were talking about Clayt not getting along with Miss Lawley. Last year he took Home Economics even though she told him he couldn't. He told her nothing in the books said he couldn't, and went over her head to the schoolboard, and they had to let him in. Mom made him an apron and he learned to make cookies and cakes and pies and even raised dough and made bread. The girls in the class thought he was wonderful, and he got along all right with the teacher, but Miss Lawley was awfully mad.

Pop said, "Nothing she could do about it."

-0-

The ride to North Leverett seemed shorter than it used to by horse and buggy. In no time we were riding past the mill with the sign Dan Glazier over the open bay. I watched for the turn in the road where you can look over to Iverson's

and catch a glimpse of the sandbank on the left above the road. This was where my heart would catch up with me when I was walking from Montague station, carrying my suitcase. I would look over at Iverson's and could hardly bear to wait.

As we come past Iverson's on the right and then Gramp's blacksmith shop, my eyes were peeled, leaning to look up the sheer slope of the sandbank to the widow's peak where pasture grass began at the top. Letting my eyes slide, I made out the henhouse near the bottom of the southern slope, and east of it in the hillside pasture, the rotted shed with its scrapheap of broken down farm machinery, where Uncle Perry used to go to find parts when he was working on some haywagon or hayrake or Gramma's buggy if a shaft got broken or the whippetree lost a ring or a screw. Most of all my eyes traveled beyond the ravine up to the low-slung house, with its front door (usually locked) and its great chimney hugging the ridge pole, where the story-and-a-half main house joined the roofline of the ell stretching east above summer kitchen, woodpile storage, and double carriage house where Buick and truck now were garaged.

On the front lawn raised above the road and under two great maples, the hammock was already hung. Mel swung left, over the thank-you-marm of the culvert, into the yard and stopped by the side door facing haybarn and cowbarn, and, to the right of those the clothesline strung on its posts in a line with icehouse and smokehouse in the tipped-up triangular acre or more of unmown side lawn between buildings and road and east pasture.

Melvin and I and Clayt and Larry and Pop piled out, and in through the screen door through the long entry into the kitchen, where Gram met us, coming out of the pantry, floury arms raised. I took in the room -- iron range in front of the boarded-up fireplace and dutch oven, kitchen table naked of cloth, great green hogshead of water barrel catching spring water piped from the top of the sandbank an eighth of a mile up at the top of the sandbank where pasture melts into forest. From the barrel, the water was piped into kitchen sink and then by hidden pipe under floorboards into the back-kitchen watering-trough, where Gram once doused Pop as a two-year-old tangled in her ankles, when she was highstepping from kitchen stove to summer kitchen with a full kettle of maple syrup just come to its terminal boil. The story is that she dropped the kettle, grabbed the tad and flung him into the trough, from where he emerged

breathless and sticky, living proof of the truth of the story. Between the two kitchens I could see the single slab of door painted green like the water barrel. Four feet wide, six feet tall, and an inch thick and on the outside, visible in the kitchen when open, it was said to bear tomahawk marks.

Gram had finished in the buttery for the day except to go back for the last tray of molasses cookies for the hot oven. Pop followed her and came back gobbling a slab of mince pie. We boys didn't follow, having had strict orders from Mom "not to make a beeline for the pantry, as if you are starved to death at home." Gramp came from the sitting room and he and Pop went back in there where we could hear them discussing politics and whether Herbert Hoover could ward off a depression as he said he could before Election.

Pop's voice came loud and affirmative: "You betcha life we have to watch out for labor organizers. They are coming into the factory but haven't got a toehold yet."

Gramp's rasping whine interrupted: "How in tarnal's name can you git rid of 'em?"

Pop was jubilant: "We fire 'em! I can tell you this much, I wouldn't allow one within a mile of my stockroom."

Clayton and Larry went out through the entry, slamming the screen door. Mel went into the livingroom. When Gram started laying table, I helped her, placing silver and tumblers beside plates. She bent to take the last tray of cookies out of the oven, and slid it to cool on the reservoir beside the eathenware bowl. then turned back to the open oven to spoon gravy over the uncovered pork roast, whose fragrance seeped into the room.

Pop and Gramp came from the livingroom, Gram let the oven door slam shut, and we all streamed back out through the entry, where the boys were talking to Mom through the open back window of the car. Pop climbed in on the passenger side in the front seat, and Clayt got into the driver's seat and started the motor, Gram holding them up to say a few words to Mertie, and Gramp talking to Pop.

Gramp said, "I always like to talk to you, Harry. Sometimes I think I don't know nawthin."

Gram was saying, "I don't suppose Lawrence can stay a few days," and Mom said, "Not this time."

Clayt backed the car, we all stood waving, and they backed onto the road and pulled along uphill towards Aunt Ruth's and Uncle Henry's up at the Corner, while we went back into the house.

Gramp sat at the head of the table buttering a slice of bread and reaching for apple jelly, Gram stooping to take out the roast and baked sweet potatoes, and going into the buttery and coming back with a dish of pickles in one hand and an apple pie in the other. She sat next to the stove, Larry beside her and Melvin and I across from them, Mel next to Gramp.

Gramp said to me, "Well, Bunny, how does it seem to be back home?"

"Wonderful!"

"I didn't know but you'd decided to be gone for good."

"I've got a job for the summer."

"I hear say. I spose you are way up there in Vermont with the tony folks."

"I'll be lugging baggage for rich people."

"I should have mortgaged the place to give your father an education. He was the brightest scholar in his class in Montague High School."

After dinner, Larry and I climbed to the top of the sandbank where we could look down at the farm spread below us, with, across the main road, the meadow road forming a T from in front of the house, and then running west down by the coal kilns, and winding around and across the bridge over Sawmill River to climb the long hill up to Lyman Glazier's, where Gramma Briggs was born, and along past Uncle Perry's and Aunt Helen's toward the Hemenway farm, where Aunt Pluma, Uncle Maurice's wife was born and raised. Whiffs of smoke from the coal kilns drifted toward the old farmhouse. I could smell it up there, high above. Suddenly, I started racing downhill, and Larry behind me. The world that had seemed so organized and complete collapsed into fragments. We were out of breath when we arrived at the bottom.

In another half hour the Ford was back in the yard ready to head for Northfield Farms. There were words between Melvin and Clayt that I couldn't hear. It ended with Mel in the front window passenger seat, Larry straddling the gear shift, and me in back between Mom and Pop, and Clayt driving. Tomorrow early I had to be on the road early to hitchhike to Middlebury.

Twenty-Three

June, 1930Chapter

Home, then return to bellhop

Back in Middlebury early afternoon Monday, I slept at Beta Kappa House, where I had left my suitcase. Tuesday morning 9:30 I stopped by the tailor's and tried on my bell-hop suit. Not glamorous like the Philip Morris ad with blouse buttons slanting in on each side to a fitted waist, and a red pillbox of a hat, this one was made of light-weight blue/gray linsey-woolsey cotton and wool, cut in a loose jacket buttoning down the front, and loose-fitting but skimpy plain trousers. Absolutely without class except "working class," it fitted perfectly.

I had no money with me to pay for it, and the tailor said he would send the bill to the hotel, a load off my mind.

I checked in with the steward, who seemed to resent my intrusion but took a minute to give me instructions. He pointed to a door in his office, and told me I could go upstairs to the attic and leave my luggage. I was scheduled for afternoon shift with Abe Manell today at one o'clock sharp and morning and evening shifts tomorrow. If I wanted lunch I should be on time at 11:00 o'clock in the helps' diningroom.

He pointed to an open door leading to the noisy kitchen. "You'll find it in there on the left."

He turned back to his papers.

I climbed four flights of narrow stairs coming out in a bare attic, part of which was partitioned off by a clapboarded partition with two doors, one into a cubbyhole, through whose open door I could see a hanging overhead light with a pull chain, and the corner of a sink, and a john and shower curtain. I knocked on another, closed door and heard Abe Manell's voice. He was inside the main attic on a cot reading.

"Do you enjoy short stories? I'm reading short stories this summer." He had a pile on the floor beside him. "Right now I'm reading Ring Lardner."

He paid no further attention. There were a couple of cheap tables and a half dozen cots, three of which were made up. High above, a skylight opened toward the south, the late morning sun streaming in, the air in the room stifling.

Abe continued turning pages. There were coathooks screwed into one wall, but no bureaus. A used towel and washcloth and assorted garments hung above Abe's cot. I chose a made-up cot with its set of hooks and fresh towel and washcloth, laid my suitcase on the cot, opened it, hung up my suitcoat and raincoat and extra pants, and changed into my bellhop suit, hanging up the shirt and pants I travelled in. There was no storage for underclothes and tooth brush and shaving stuff, so I left them in my open suitcase and shoved them under the bed.

It was already quarter to eleven. Abe making no move to change into his work clothes before lunch, I went downstairs to the helps' diningroom, where a half dozen waitresses and chambermaids were chattering. They looked at me curiously but didn't greet me until I sat at one of the places where a plate and knife, fork, and spoon seemed to invite company. One of the girls, seeing me sit down, pointed to a stack of plates and a tray of silver on a serving table. I got up, helped myself, and set my place where there was a vacancy.

There was a rush and a pulling aside to make room for a kitchen boy in stained trousers carrying a steaming kettle from which streamed an aroma anything but inviting. When the boy withdrew, the girls held their noses, and started dipping a ladle into the kettle and fishing out chunks of fatty beef and potato and cabbage. An odor of spoiled meat was nearly overpowering. After I waited to fill my plate, I managed to get down some potato and cabbage, but the meat was untouchable. One of the girls went away and returned with a platter of

bread, which they help themselves to and passed to me, and we all sopped up gravy. They were still holding their noses. I ate a few mouthfuls and retired.

At the bellhop station where the first shift was ready to go off duty, I introduced myself to Carl Seymour, who was also new on the job. He told me that Bill Lieson from Williamstown was coming to join us tomorrow. Complaining of the quiet morning --very few guests this week -- he rattled change in his pocket as if to indicate the sparsity of tips. The striking clock in the lounge announced the noon hour, the bell at the desk rang, the deskclerk called "Front!" Carl looked at me, and I got instructions to go to room 112 for a checkout.

Carl lingered to show me how to manage the Otis elevator by pushing a button to open the door, then using a lever that automatically closed the door and carried the passenger up or down depending on whether the lever turned toward UP or DOWN, the contraption creaking and grinding as it rose. You had to be careful to stop it on a level with the floor.

Carl left me at the second floor and I went to Room 112. where the door was open and two very large, strapped suitcases and a hatbox were lined up along the wall opposite the open bathroom door. A fluttery little lady and her shirtsleeved husband, both medium build and obviously not moneybags, hovered beyond, and I pushed past them as if I knew what I was doing and checked the window to make sure it was tight against rain.

The lady said, "Oh, my! Are you sure you can manage?"

I shoved one suitcase into the hall and followed it with the other, and with space between them, tucked the hatbox under my arm, shouldered both cases, taking care not to crush the hatbox. led the way to the elevator, set down my burden and pushed the bell, hoping the lift had stayed at second floor level, as it had. I stepped aside for them to enter, then shoved in the two cases, laid the hatbox on top and turned the lever toward DOWN. I had my eye out for the door into the downstairs hall, and expertly stopped the lift at floor level.

In the hall, the husband gave me a ring of car keys: "Blue Dodge coupe, Massachusetts number plate."

They both turned to the checkout, while I knew enough to keep my shoulders and knees straight, not to stagger under my load. With right elbow I pushed open the screen door as if I was at Hepburn moving a tray of loaded plates from the serving room to the diningroom. I set the load at curb edge and

walked past the bay window of the diningroom into the parking lot where a half dozen cars were parked but only one blue Dodge. I unlocked it, got in, slammed the door tight, put the key in the ignition, turned it, and the engine purred. Wishing I were taking it for a spin, very gradually I let out the gear shift, backed, turned front wheels toward the street, and pushed gently down on the gas, letting the car roll. There being no traffic, I let the car glide to the curbside in front of the steps, judging when the right back wheel was lined up just ahead of the luggage. I took the key out of the ignition, rolled down the window, closed the door carefully against passing traffic, and walked around back and unlocked the trunk.

I was loading the first suitcase when the lady came down the steps. Pushing the case upright against the back of the luggage space, I swung the other one up and laid it flat, filling the space tightly. There was plenty of room for the hatbox at one side. I let down the lid firmly, and turned the key in the lock, and stood there holding the right door open for her to get in.

"My! you managed that well!"

Her husband came out and I went around ahead of him, opened the door on the street side, guarding against traffic, and let him in, passing him the keys and standing there with the door partly open.

He started to turn on the ignition, then seeing me there and the door still open, reached into his pocket and fumbled with change, then handed me a quarter.

"Thank you very much, Sir! Have a pleasant trip!"

I was still leaning against the car with one hand on the window ledge. The lady gave her husband a nudge, and he put his hand back in his pocket and came up with another quarter, then turned on the ignition, turned it off, and said, "We are heading toward Rutland."

"Watch for traffic coming around behind you here. It's one-way. Keep over to the left. Let the car slide down to the intersection. Stop at the stop sign. Look for cars coming from either direction, and when it's safe let the car swing left, swing left again uphill on the other side of the island where it's one-way traffic. At the top, turn right, and you're headed for Rutland."

They were on the way. I jiggled the change in my pocket. I have got my first tip.

-O-

Abe Manell informed me what a mistake I made to go to the helps' diningroom.

"The food there is garbage. Waitresses and chambermaids can't do anything about it. Meals are timed for just before they go on duty. A bellhop can plan his shift so he's busy. Then you go to the chef and ask for a meal and he gives you a choice from today's menu."

It worked. The chef and his helpers liked to chew fat with bellhops and get information about guests and other skullduggery. They passed on their own dope. Like the chef told about waitresses standing in line giving their orders, and he reached down and fussed with his fly and rolled up the end of a hotdog over the counter in front of him, and raised a cleaver and cut the top end of it off and threw it into a trash bucket and pushed the lower half back into his pants, "So much for that!" According to him the whole line of waitresses keeled over in a dead faint.

-O-

Bill Lieson turned out to be going into his junior year at Williams. Wiry, taller than I, and much more knowledgeable, he had had a year of bellhopping at Williams Inn, the official college inn, on campus grounds. He was William A. Lieson, Jr., his father having been a Springfield, Mass. banker, who died suddenly during Bill's freshman year, so Bill had to start earning his living. He was pretty realistic and didn't have my need to prove myself to myself by working into a conversation with guests the fact that there was a college in Middlebury where I was a student. Especially with a sympathetic woman, I found myself slipping in this information if she showed the least curiosity. Most guests didn't. I was a convenience. I didn't like to hold out my hand for a tip. Worse than getting nothing was the feeling of shame if you did make a play for it and had it ignored -- as if he might have tipped you if you hadn't put the heat on him.

-O-

There was a sweet girl in a wheelchair who rode up and down in the elevator, and tried not to be a nuisance. She had spasms in her arms and legs and couldn't control them. For a while the steward was watching out for her, and wheeled her up and down and into the diningroom or over to a writing desk. They seemed to be sweet on each other. Then he started ignoring her. She threw tantrums. I heard she was a relative of one of the owners, and came for a

week and stayed on. She did a lot of crying in secret, you could tell by her eyes, but she didn't want my sympathy and stopped being as sweet as she used to.

-O-

For a while I had to go up to the second floor to help an old man walk to the elevator, and then hold him under the shoulder while he leaned against me to get over to a seat by a west window. He used to be a dentist, and now was retired, the Inn become his home. He was somewhat washed out and squashy and didn't talk straight. One day I looked over from the bench and saw him squashed down in his chair. When I got there, long gobs of snot looped from both nostrils down to his knees. His eyes were glazed over. I called the deskclerk, and one on each side, we walked him to the elevator and upstairs.

After a while a doctor hurried in the front door and went up in the elevator, and we never saw the dentist again. They didn't bring him down in the elevator, but carried him down the back stairs to the service loading platform, where a hearse was waiting. I wondered what he did with his money.

-O-

I had a shock at the beginning of July, when we got checks from the management. I expected to get 40 dollars, but was told that amount was deducted towards the 50 dollar cost of my suit. I still owed 10 dollars to be subtracted in August. Checking with Abe, I learned that this was regular procedure.

-O-

One afternoon late I got a call of "Front!" I went out, and found a young fellow and his dolled-up wife in a flashy sports roadster with the top down. She waited for me to open her door. The young man came around and unlocked the trunk. They had tons of luggage in the trunk and piled on the back seat. I brought the two-wheeled luggage truck just inside the front door and carried armloads of suitcases up the front steps and loaded them on. The flashy young couple took a livingroom/bedroom suite with connecting bath and a view out over the town to college hill. When I had their luggage stowed away, the young man threw me a wink and tossed the keys, and I caught them and went down to park the car.

The instrument panel had more gadgets than I knew what to do with, and the engine started so easy I hardly realized it was turned on. When I shifted into

gear and put my foot on the gas, lucky for me there was no traffic. Before I knew it, we whizzed down to the intersection, where I couldn't stop for the stop sign but hung onto the wheel and swung around up past the island on the other side and cramped left into the parking lot without hardly a touch on the pedal. It was scary, and I hoped nobody was watching. I wondered if I should put up the top in case of rain or heavy dew but decided not to do anything I hadn't been told to. When I stopped at the desk to leave the keys in their box, the deskclerk told me the fellow was a graduate of Middlebury, the manager of Macy's in New York.

The next morning I was on duty when they checked out, and they asked for me, ordering to have the car brought around front. I had to bring all the luggage back down and store it while they had a late breakfast. I was standing by the curb holding the door for the wife when they came out to leave. When I gave back the keys, he slipped me a five dollar bill.

-O-

Most tips were quarters and dimes, sometimes fifty cents, and a few dollar bills. The worst was the August jamboree of Knights Templars. These middle-aged and past-middle-aged celebrants and their wives were jolly on arrival, and loud in mutual congratulation. But they quickly ran us ragged to fetch buckets of ice to their rooms and by midnight all three floors were bedlam. We didn't go off duty at 11:00 o'clock and at midnight were still running errands. They became bad tempered because the coffee shop and room service closed at 10:30. They were with us two nights and one full day. When they checked out in the morning of the third day some of them pretended they tipped bellboys along with waitresses at their banquet. If they did, I didn't see any of it, not even from the party who asked me to carry down to the station letters to the night train to put in the mailbag hung out on the high arm reaching over the sidewalk for the baggage man to snatch in.

-O-

Toward the end of August I got a note from Dean Hazeltine asking me to see him. He wondered if I was interested in making my board for next year by working in the kitchen of the Sergeant House, down the street on the left a bit south of the Inn toward Rutland. When I went for an interview, I discovered a three story brick building that had seen better days. Miss Sergeant, who conducted the interview, was a gaunt, moderately smartly dressed maiden lady,

who wanted to know about my background and whether I could guarantee to be on time for work if they hired me. The cook needed a helper to peel potatoes, wash and clean vegetables and do odd jobs in the kitchen. Their clients were chiefly traveling salesmen. They wanted somebody to come in around seven before they opened for breakfast, and help prepare fruit and cut butter, slice bread, make toast and other chores, and then come back again in the late afternoon and stay through dinner. They had a waitress, but if they had a full house I might be asked to wait table, and I told her I had waited on table at Hepburn.

She took me into the kitchen to meet the cook, a bent and twisted gnome of an old woman, who studied me with shrewd sharp eyes. She was bent over the open oven testing a roast with a fork, but straightened up and glared at me so malevolently that I decided that she was the one who would be my boss. I wondered if she was clean. I was rather afraid of her, but I needed the job, and asked to make sure of the hours.

Miss Sergeant told me, "You will be free at 8:30 at the latest in the morning, and we would expect you at five in the afternoon, and you'd probably be free by 7:30."

I asked about noon, and she said I would be welcome to come for lunch, but I wouldn't be expected to work then. These were as good hours or better as I had at Hepburn (especially the no-work-at-noon).

When she said, "Take a few days to think it over," I was afraid she might have somebody else in mind, and said I would like to have the job. She didn't ask me to sign a contract, and didn't offer to sign one for me. This opportunity for free meals was a great load off my mind, especially because I had been worrying I would not get as much from my summer at the Inn as I hoped for. Now I would be fully as well off as I was last year.

-O-

I'd been putting my money from tips into Middlebury Bank and Trust next door north on Burlington Street from the Inn. By the third week in August I had almost \$300, plus \$30 I had just paid for a Corona Portable typewriter, and another twenty for a new suit from Men's Clothing on Main Street next to the bridge. When I went to pay my bill for tuition and room and fees for the first semester, I had another chance to talk with the Treasurer. He was very

considerate and kind with me, and talked man to man. His name was Fletcher and he lived a couple of houses away from the Moodies on South Street. He reminded me that I owed \$250 past due but, as he told me when I borrowed it, I wouldn't have to start paying that back until after I graduated, and I wouldn't pay interest until after graduation. He seemed pleased for me that I could pay everything owed for first semester sophomore year. When he asked about board, I told him I would be working my way at Sergeant House. That seemed to take a load off his mind. With my \$200 scholarship, I'd have enough to just about squeeze through room rent and fees for second semester. Tuition for second semester would be a problem. I'd have enough to buy books with, and since I was taking three year courses that meant that books for American Literature, Geology, and Intermediate French would be paid for both semesters. I would have enough to pay for books for Pliny first semester, and for Introduction to Psychology, but I'd have to scrounge around in January to piece out book money for Horace and Principles of Education. I explained to Mr. Fletcher that I'd decided to major in English and take a minor in Education for high school teaching. That way I'd be sure of a job when I graduate.

Chapter Twenty-Four

Fall, 1930
Sophomore

Doc Cook was a graduate of Oxford, new last year, and already chairman of a new department of American Literature. I liked Doc from his first sentence, because he talked very directly with no pretending to be somewhere up above us and talking down. Our class met in Warner Hemicycle with the seats going up from the pit, fanning out in a half circle from the platform and lectern. Idealistic and innovative, Doc's teaching won the praise of nearly everybody.

For our first assignment, he set us to read some fragments of William Bradford's History of Plimoth Plantation and write a paper on the Pilgrims. Doc didn't want a research paper, but wanted us to put ourselves into the picture and imagine what it could have been like to be there.

"Don't be afraid to put your feelings into it."

I got excited about it -- coming from Massachusetts and Gramp told me something about what it might have been like for settlers to come to Brushy Mountain in Moores Corner in 1790 to cut virgin timber for the new watermill at the foot of the mountain, where rapids had been dammed up for a millpond in 1789. Gramp used to talk about it when we went up there to salt calves in his mountain pasture.

"Right over there, you look sharp, you can still see the cellar hole, that hollow in the earth. That mound of powdered brick and stone down there is what remains of their hearth. That flat piece of granite right in front of you was their door sill, and those lilac bushes still blooming in late April, while those prickly little bushes over at the corner are spice bushes, flowering currant, that the settlers brought along from Oakham or Hardwick, northeast of Worcester. Jonathan Glazier, my great grandfather -- your great, great, great __ came here from Oakham across Quabbin Swamp, where Indians had their trails. The savages set up their tepees here on the mountain, and the first settlers when they built down in the valley had to protect themselves from Indian attack because this used to be their hunting ground, and they wanted to keep it. Those old apple trees were brought here by the white men."

I was primed for Doc Cook's first paper assignment, only I couldn't seem to find the right way to get started until I dipped into a novel from the library, a copy of Sinclair Lewis's Main Street that began "A man and a girl on a hilltop..."

It gave me an idea to start my paper "A man and a woman on a hilltop..." and describe their puritan clothes: his shoebuckle hat and her long, mustard-yellow dress and white apron, and I imagined them looking over the great wilderness stretching west from Plimoth Plantation. They had climbed a hill outside their palisade to be alone with each other and look at the sunset and at the tall trees stretching west farther than they could see. I had them kneel down.

"Let us pray," the man said as they knelt there. I left it at that, their presence there telling their story without my talking about them.

When the papers came back, Doc read mine in class without saying who wrote it.

-O-

I was most worried over Latin, having got that 79 from Dame that kept me off the Dean's List. I made up my mind that this year I would get some kind of B, doubting if anybody would get A except Pa White's son, in our class. The first day Professor White told us his interesting method to read Pliny.

"You must read Latin the way the Romans did. It was not a dead language to them, but alive to the Romans, their speech, their means of communication, just the way English is yours. You don't read English by looking up every word in the dictionary as you come to it, but read by phrases, by clauses, by sentences, by word groups held together by thought content as well as syntax. I want you to read Pliny by whole paragraphs. Read a whole paragraph all the way through and you'll find you know some of the words. So try putting them together, see what you can make out of them without looking in the glossary. The words you don't know, if you have to look them up in the glossary and add them to what you already recognize, you'll find suddenly the meaning of the whole paragraph jumping into your mind before you've half finished using the dictionary. The business of tearing into a paragraph word after word after word is the last way to get at the meaning. You don't read English that way."

To make his clincher, Pa White waved toward the back of the room.

"Back there in this class is somebody who's been talking Latin since he could speak."

We all turned to look, and if we didn't know before, we realized in a minute who he was talking about, because Pete White was slumped down in his chair looking as if he was trying to decide whether to be proud or ashamed of his accomplishment.

"My son started talking Latin before he spoke English. We have conversations. He reads like a native, the way the Romans read Latin."

I thought it made sense and was in a hurry to get back to Middle Painter to try his method, and found I could sometimes read a paragraph and get at the meaning with half the trouble I had when I looked up word after word as I came to them. I began to lose that cramped embarrassment as if, looking at Latin, I was looking at a blank wall that had to be torn to pieces brick after brick and put back together. I knew I could never catch up with Pete White, but reading Latin, I soon discovered was an entirely new experience and would never be the same again.

Another thing about Pa White: All the way through class, he kept abstractedly fingering the Phi Beta key he wore as a watch fob, as if he wanted to make sure it hadn't dropped off, or as if somehow his security depended on reminding himself that he could always have support from that proof of superiority.

-O-

Introduction to Psychology was taught by a tall drink of water, Professor Whipple, who seemed to have a perpetual snuffle. He pecked at his nose all the time, as if he had to have this diversion because his subject was so close to him it bored the life out of him. He had to have something to take his mind off it. We called him Pecksniff. Though he was probably a really nice family man, he was so selfconscious. I sensed he was scared of us, and believed it would be a pipe course.

I was minoring in Education because I wanted to be a high school teacher, as I told Mr. Fletcher, and with four hard courses, my Education courses would be something I could breeze through until just before an examination, then cram the book, get an A or high B and forget it. I rationalized I would learn more about teaching the first week in my classroom than in three years of Education requirements. The way Pecksniff taught it, Introduction to Psychology was just

common sense: you had to learn the vocabulary and refresh yourself before taking a test and that was all there was to it.

I had Mr. Ranty again in Intermediate French and he was the same roly-poly who greeted me the first day with "Encore, Monsieur Vitrier." Abe Manell came along with me into that class and we both had a headstart with Monsieur Ranty.

In Geology our teacher was Professor Schmidt, who took us on field trips to Otter Creek to view pot holes in limestone, and to Ausable Chasm to view strata in rock ledges, and we looked into a cave where there were stalagmites and stalactites. One assignment was to mould a dinosaur out of clay. He showed us eskers or drumlins laid down as terminal moraine by glaciers, and I realized that the sandbank north of Gramp's house was made that way.

-O-

After a week working in the kitchen at the Sergeant House I was surprised to discover that there was nothing for me to do. A misshapen bundle of rags and filth took over my job of preparing breakfast fruit in the morning, and peeling potatoes, and washing and slicing vegetables for lunch and dinner. She looked like an old trollop. She mumbled and fumbled her work. Nobody paid any special attention to her. I had no idea where she was when I came for my interview, but she was there all the time now.

Miss Sergeant told me I no longer had to come early for meals. I could have breakfast any time between 7:00 and 9:30, lunch from noon till 1:30, and dinner from 6:00 to 7:30. All they asked was that I be within those hours. I didn't use the side kitchen door but came in through the lobby, and straight into the diningroom, which was never crowded, sometimes I being the only one there. The waitress took my order as if I was a guest.

At first I thought I must have done something wrong, but it wasn't that. They were suddenly treating me like family. There was a Mr. Sergeant, the son of the cook and brother to Miss Sergeant, who called him "Serge" so, after calling him Mr. Sergeant for a while, I started using his sister's nickname for him. He seemed to prefer it. He was a tall, medium heavy man, dressed usually in a black or brown suit and white shirt and tie. He was the business end of the hotel, and, discreetly modest, although the man of the house, he showed he knew the women ran the show. Miss Sergeant was the housekeeper, he was the manager, and their mother the cook. I sized up the situation that the mother was

the real boss, the one who really gave me the once-over when I applied. I was scared of her. Now she became friendly, but --if there were traveling salesman guests -- awfully busy. She kept several entrees on hand for dinner -- roast beef and roast pork, always, and chops and omelettes and lamb on order. On Fridays there was fish. I didn't see how one person could take care of so many menus, but with a lot of groaning and fussing and scrambling around, Old Lady Sergeant did.

I tried to comprehend the riddle of why they hired me, since I didn't do a smitch of work unless the waitress got loaded with more than two tablesful, which wasn't often: on those rare occasions I pitched in to help, chiefly as busboy, she taking orders, and getting the tips. It crossed my mind, even, that Prexy Moody once said that Professor Perkins, my math teacher, was a rich man with a way of helping students he cottoned to. Could it be he was behind my windfall, slipping money to the Sergeants and I not informed? No reason I should be, come to think of it.

Sunday mornings when I slept late and came early for noon meal, I often skipped in through the kitchen door and talked with the Old Lady, with her helper sitting there scratching her scalp and peeling potatoes with an incredibly dull knife. The old lady asked questions about schoolwork. She seemed to know President Moody and Mr. Fletcher, but never mentioned Professor Perkins. After we got to be real friends, she started going to a cabinet filled with bottles, and poured me a thimbleful of blackberry cordial or homemade dandelion wine, sometimes beet wine even though it was Prohibition. She had a snifter herself, smacking her lips.

The first time I had a glass of wine was when Mel and I were working in the factory, and Pheenie invited him to a party at a friend's house and told him to bring me along. I couldn't really get interested in any of the girls there. One of the fellows, a big lumberjack of a man sitting in an armed kitchen chair, with his legs spread, kept reaching out and pulling his girl between his legs and reaching around behind for her rump and pulling her in and twisting her around close in to him while they smooched. Even though I looked away, I couldn't help notice what was going on. The father of the girl who was giving the party came into the kitchen and went to the cupboard and poured us all glasses of grape wine he made himself.

For some reason we didn't have the car that night, and after the party, walked back the three miles to Northfield Farms. A warm spring night, cicadas were scratching their legs together and playing their violins in the locust trees. As we walked along, I found myself giving sidelong looks at Mel and caught him giving a look back.

I said, "I don't know about you, but I liked it!"

Mel said earnestly, "I liked it. too."

I didn't know about him, but I had a warm feeling in my gut that relaxed me and made me feel light headed, wondering complacently if I was about to become an alcoholic.

The dandelion wine at the Sergeant House made me feel the same way. The first time since I was in high school I was not working for a living, I felt like one of the students must feel who had a rich father and didn't have to worry about being bounced for not being able to pay tuition.

It made a difference in my grades -- more time to do homework. The long walk back and forth between Middle Painter and the Sergeant House brought me through town every day and I began to feel like a day student living in Middlebury and the Sergeants my family. At midsemester I was getting B in Latin, and Geology and Psychology were pipe courses in which I could get a high grade if I did daily homework and crammed for a test. I was beginning to discover this advantage to having a minor in Education. Everybody talked about those courses as waste of time, but I learned things in Psych that I couldn't learn anywhere else and at the same time had the benefit of time to spare for my hard courses like Latin and French -- and Am Lit, where in spite of high grades in papers, I was getting only B.

-O-

We got paid \$10 a month for choir. Pud Fish called it her "widow's mite." In September Mel went to see her and she accepted him. He sang tenor and I bass. In Mead Chapel the choir sat on four high-backed wooden benches, two each along the south and the north sides of the sanctuary. On the south tenors sat in the back row with sopranos in front of them, and on the north basses in back with altos in front. On each side, the benches were banked, so that the top of the high back of the women's bench was on a level with the knees of the men sitting in back. When seated the two rows on one side faced the two on the

other side, but to project our voices, we were instructed to swivel toward the congregation when we sang. Pud managed so that Mel in the back row on the south, and I in the corresponding row on the north, stood at the outer end of our rows facing the student body arranged alphabetically in their pews, women on the right side as you came in, men on the left. Looking toward us, they confronted the two Glaziers, prominently displayed in their opposite rows, the same runty height and build as if we were twins. I think Pud got a mild humorous charge out of this arrangement.

Since Middlebury was small enough so that students made a practice of calling each other by first name when they met, I soon had to get used to being called Mel and the same in reverse for him. Our friends could differentiate because we had visible facial differences; and since he majored in Science I in Arts we were no problem for teachers unless we met one of them outside of class. As for the general student body, it was hardly worthwhile to spend a lot of time telling near strangers, "You've got the wrong Glazier, I'm Lyle."

-O-

The girls in the choir made a fuss over Prexy. If he came into our robing room back of the high wall behind the bench for basses, altos and sopranos flocked around him and straightened his tie or his hood, and he enjoyed these mild flirtations.

-O-

The last week of classes before Christmas, Mel was going on a gleeclub trip and from there home, the Moodys were going to Northfield, but I was staying for the last week of classes. I'd agreed to care for the Moodys' furnace for Mel while he was away, and planned to remain on campus for the holiday. I'd have Christmas dinner at the Sergeant House, and catch up on a couple of short papers for Doc Cook, both written in first draft, but, a perfectionist, I found myself often writing a first draft and never getting around to typing it because it wasn't quite what I wanted. Most semesters I ended up with one or two papers never turned in. It made my grade suffer, but I tried to persuade myself I'm in it for what I learned, not for the grade.

Right after Christmas, the weather was cold but not frigid. I went three times a day to the Moodys to stoke the furnace. Mel told me to keep it going even but not to open the draft wide unless it got really cold. All I had to do was

open the furnace door, look inside, and if there was an even bed of coals showing under the burnt-out gray ash on top, pull the lever opening the coal chute and let in enough fresh coal to cover the top a few inches, then close it again. With nobody home, it wasn't necessary to burn a lot of coal to keep the house at an even temperature. President and Mrs. Moody would be back the day after New Years. If I had trouble, Margaret was two doors away at the Fletchers'. It seemed so simple I hardly gave it a thought, working on those two back assignments in American Literature, one to write a gothic story or poem in the manner of Poe that I'd started with a draft of a spoof that got stuck halfway through because I had a line ending in "cat's whiskers" and couldn't find anything to rhyme except "that's a risk fer us," or you could even say, to make it exact, "that's risk fer's." I didn't know how to finagle it, and had become unsure even that I wanted to. I'd come to realize Poe's greatness was not in his tricky wordplays like "tintinnabulation of the bells" but in a poem like

Helen, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicean barks of yore
That lately o'er a perfumed sea
The weary, wayworn wanderer bore
To his own native shore

I couldn't touch that with a ten foot pole, and I wouldn't try.

The day before New Years, the thermometer zoomed down to eleven below. At 7:00 a.m. my ears were tingling and when I arrived from Painter, the key stuck in the lock of the front door and refused to turn. When I took off my mittens to get a better purchase, my thumb and index finger froze to the cold metal, but the key turned. Inside, the air in the hall seemed about the same as usual. I opened the cellar door, switched on the light and rattled downstairs, went through the labyrinthian gloom to the furnace room, pulled on the overhead light, and clanged open the furnace door. There was a red bed of coals, everything plugging along first-rate. I gave a couple turns to the grate shaker, opened the ashbin door below, and was surprised at the small amount of ash. I took the coal shovel and cleaned out the ashpit, then whanged shut the door and looked in again on the open bed of coals, pulled the chute lever and let in a good couple of inches of fresh coal. I wondered if I ought to open the draft and

perhaps give a hefty lunge on the shaker but decided to leave well enough alone. Under its layer of fresh fuel, the ancient furnace was doing its business. For good measure I pulled the lever of the chute and let in considerable more coal, but left the draft as it had been, emptied the coalbucket into the iron scoop of the wheelbarrow, pulled off the overhead light and felt my way to the cellar stairs. Back on the ground floor, I moseyed through the livingroom then upstairs along the hall, and looked into the bedrooms -- everything hunky-dory, so back downstairs and outdoors, scurrying along the street to the Sergeant House, thumping my arms against my sides to keep warm.

By noon, the mercury hadn't given a fraction of an inch, if anything worsened. This time I gritted my teeth and really shook the stuffing out of the grate and let down into the ashpit a cloud of dust that must have been accumulating for some days. In the ash I spied a few red coals that I fished out with tongs and put back into the firebox, opened the damper on the draft, pumped the lever to let down a half dozen shovelful of green coal, and slammed the door, feeling better about it. Five hours later, when I looked in at six o'clock on my way to the Sergeant House, the air in the front hall seemed comfortably warm. I went down and shook some more deviltry out of the grate, and decided to open the damper a bit more while I went to dinner. When I looked in again at 7:30 after stopping for a lesson in pinochle with Old Man Craig who had come to winter with the Sergeants, I was satisfied I had managed Ok, even though I began to think I might better have put on the heat a bit sooner. I walked all over the house looking into rooms, and it really felt different. The great livingroom looked ready for a party.

By the thermometer at the side door leading to the garage, it was already fifteen below zero and, judging by my tingling ears, promised to be colder. I went back down cellar and continued to punish the machinery, glad I tumbled to the emergency and got the feel of the furnace in time.

Back at the dorm, Rawl and I had a bull session about Poe and Hawthorne. I didn't know about him, but most of what I was thinking I couldn't find words for. We talked late. He knew I was taking care of Prexy's furnace for Mel, and agreed that tomorrow morning he would go there with me to take a look.

At 7:00 a.m. it was 25 below zero. When I unlocked the door, a wave of warm air flooded out to meet us. All night the purring furnace must have been

doing its duty -- it was Florida inside. We could hear the pipes singing, and I could make out another sound, and it sounded ominous -- the sound of running water. We dashed into the livingroom where, above the fireplace, trickles of water were smudging the wallpaper, seeping from the ceiling down the wall around the portrait of D. L. Moody. I dashed for the cellar stairs and down them two stairs at a time, Rollin after me. We plunged through dim light toward the furnace, where, when I opened the door a flat bed of red fire was blazing. I slammed the door, rushed ahead up into the hall and up a second flight to the second floor corridor, where the sound of running water led through a closed door into a bathroom. A thick chunk of ice lay in a small lake of water, half filling the tub. A stalactite of twisted icicle was braided down from the faucet, and a spurt of water gushed from a burst water pipe. It was the freezing temperature followed by the quick thaw I engineered by cranking up the furnace that did it.

I slammed the bathroom door, and ran down to the telephone and called the Fletcher house and was soon talking to Margaret, who was wonderful. She didn't let any excitement come into her voice.

"Oh, that old furnace! It's not your fault. I'll be right over!"

There was nothing to do but wait. She knew exactly what to do, called the Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, and continued to console me. She was a miracle.

"It's the fault of the old furnace. We've been complaining about it for years. Now at last perhaps somebody will listen."

You would think I had done them a favor.

In a short time we were surrounded with specialists who took my misery out of my hands if not out of my mind.

Chapter Twenty-Five

Sophomore
Spring, 1931

I had two new professors -- in Horace and in Educational Psychology.

Professor Burrage was an elegant old world gentleman. I knew nothing about his background but he was different from any teacher I'd ever had. He was courtly in class, had a class list, and a systematic way of going the rounds of the class row by row and asking for translation of a portion of the poem assigned for the day. We were all under pressure: until he reached our name, there was a buildup of anxiety, if not of terror. If you looked ahead to anticipate your passage, you could lose track of the class, and be lost in limbo and when he called on you have to ask where we were in the poem. It could be very embarrassing. About half the students used trots most of the time, and had the trot open with the passage showing tucked in at the top or at one side of the

book. Burrage looked out over his glasses with a ferreting gaze, and when the student had read the portion in terrible trot language, he would say, "That is very accurate, Miss Jones (or Mr. Smith)" and you could see him with his gradebook open making an elaborate zero opposite the student's name.

I liked it best when he gave us the benefit of his own translation, which was always both accurate and full of tenderness or wit. I was trying to carry over from Pa White the technique of not reading the poem word for word or line by line, or even stanza by stanza, but first to glance through the whole poem, using the words already familiar to catch some kind of rough meaning, so that you began with the whole poem not a pulled-apart fragment. At the start, this method seemed to be wasting time, but in the long run it gave a better meaning of the whole, and it came closer to leaving an impression of the poem as poem, instead of a mess of verbiage, held together by straining grammar and syntax.

Pete White was in the class, and his translation never cast a doubt on his firsthand mastery of literal meaning. He never seemed to have used a trot, and yet word for word he could nail down the meaning. One thing I felt about him, I wondered if he grasped an inkling of the poetry. But I was too uncertain of my own mastery to be critical of any product achieved by the scholar who had been talking Latin since he was two. So far as I could tell, Burrage never had anything but the highest respect for Pete's accomplishment, just as I could never see the least sign that he had more than a neutral response to my looser but less secure rendition, delivered, in spite of myself, with a voice quaver I couldn't control.

-O-

Professor Kingsley, teacher of Educational Psychology, was a self promoter. He was famous for being the only member of the faculty listed in Marquis Who's Who in America. He was the friend of everybody and everybody was his friend. It was rumored that the only way you could escape getting an A was to die before the end of the semester and send him an invitation to your funeral, and even that was not sure. It was a huge class, meeting in the large lecture room on the first floor of Old Chapel. It was required for all sophomores majoring in Education, and was also one of the most popular electives, crammed with fraternity deadbeats sent there by command of their chapter leadership.

Dr. Kingsley illustrated his philosophy of education by his teaching. He lectured on the importance of knowing students by name and having a personal

relationship with them and kept an elaborate attendance record and called the class roll every day, using up the first ten or fifteen minutes of the 55-minute hour. Attendance was nearly always perfect because if someone's name was called there was always someone to answer.

Dr. Kingsley was a champion of discussion, loving to illustrate such principles of education as STUDENT INVOLVEMENT, written in all caps on the blackboard. If he called on someone by name, there was usually no answer, but if he threw open a question, hands were raised everywhere.

He spent an hour lecturing on COMMITTEE REPORTS AS A MEANS OF AROUSING FULL PARTICIPATION. At the end of that hour, he appointed the first person in every row to be chair of a committee to discuss such important principles as an INCIPIENTLY DISORDERLY CLASS, THE TRUE/FALSE QUESTION AS A CRITERION FOR OBJECTIVE GRADING, or NEVER THREATEN A STUDENT OR A CLASS. These were some of the topics he wrote on the blackboard for committee reports to be presented under the chairmanship of the student sitting in the front seat of each row. Besides the chairman, each committee was to be made up of the other students sitting in the row in back of the chairman. It was the duty of the chair to organize his committee and be prepared to present a discussion at our next class. This was to be a major INSTRUMENTAL DEVICE for carrying on the class for the rest of the semester. When all the reports had been presented, every student in the class would have participated, and we could start the proceeding again by moving the chairmanship back to the second student sitting in each row, Etc.

The next class, Dr. Kingsley arrived early and was in the room as soon as it was vacated by the preceding class. He solicited the willing participation of early arrivers to move his desk out of the way and set up a line of folding chairs across the front of the platform. Drumming his fingers on the arm of his chair, he waited for the room to fill, and after rollcall, with considerable dramatic flair, called on the first person in the first seat in the first row to come forward to present his committee.

An expression of total blank was registered on the face of the occupant of that chair.

Professor Kingsley encouraged him, "Don't be shy, Mr. err, Mr. Err, please come forward and introduce yourself and your committee."

The young man protested, "But Dr. Kingsley, I wasn't sitting in this seat yesterday."

"You weren't? Then who was? Who was appointed chair of the first committee?"

He looked around the room. Nobody admitted to having occupied the anxious seat.

"Well, then, we will hear the second committee. Miss Err, will you please come forward and present your committee."

"I am sorry, Dr. Kingsley, but I was absent Monday, because of illness in my family."

"Then who was appointed chair of the second committee?"

Again there were no takers. Dr. Kingsley searched faces in vain. There were no volunteers for chair of any committees.

"Well, then, we will dissolve into a Committee of the Whole, and discuss..."

He took a sheaf of papers out of his briefcase and shuffled through them, then came up triumphantly with the one he seemed to have been looking for.

"We will discuss THE INCIPIENTLY DISORDERLY CLASS. Who will volunteer to begin the discussion?"

Hands were raised everywhere. There were more ideas expressed than could possibly be dealt with in the hour, and Professor Kingsley was left with a high opinion of his ability to lead class discussion. He never did get to identify any student by name, but continued religiously to take class roll, and never attempted to resurrect full participation by committee report.

There was a campus rule that after the first warning bell, if a professor was absent or tardy when the second bell rang, students didn't have to wait longer. One day, Dr. Kingsley was tardy. One of the athletes ran to the door of Old Chapel, and after a couple of minutes flew back to report that the professor was hurrying up through the trees of lower campus. At the first peel of the second bell, the class erupted, crowding through the door into the narrow corridor, pretending to be the previous class sprinting to another appointment. Encountering them in the narrow space, Dr. Kingsley politely took off his hat, effaced himself against the wall, and greeted them with "Good morning, Sir, Good morning, Miss," but apparently not for sure recognizing anybody. When he got to the room, the tailends of students were disappearing out of open

groundfloor windows. An apocryphal story floated around that an unidentified timid sophomore, finding himself hindmost in one of the lines leaving by a back window, caught sight of a dustmop in the corner, and started sweeping the aisle, pretending he was the janitor.

The midterm examination was a model of true/false objectivity containing such opaque transparencies as:

An incipiently disorderly class is a class that is
out of control. True?___False?___.
Never threaten a student or a class unless you can
carry out the threat. True?___False?___.
The advantage of True/False is that it can be
absolutely objective. True?___False?___.

Dr. Kingsley maintained his popularity. I never heard of a student who disliked him, or complained of his grade.

Chapter Twenty-Six

1931

Spring Vacation

I was looking forward to spring vacation because I had a ride home with Professor and Mrs. Barney, who would drop me off in Greenfield. Barney was Dean of Students, something different from the job of Dean Hazeltine, who let you know when you were warned for low grades, or were in trouble for some misbehavior.

Hazeltine was the one who warned me I was getting a D in Latin at the first marking period freshman year. He also was in charge of the job program for giving students loose change from mowing lawns or beating rugs or whatever at faculty homes. I went to see him when I had to buy a new textbook and didn't have a penny, and he sent me somewhere to beat rugs, or climb a ladder to get leaves out of a gutter, or weed witch grass out flowerbeds to free lily of the valley or crocus or daffodils or jonquils.

The last time I had help from him was early April, three months after I let Prexy's furnace burn low during the January cold snap and a waterpipe burst in a bathroom above their livingroom. That afternoon, when I arrived at the front door, it was Prexy answered the bell.

I was fearful of my welcome, but he greeted me warmly as if I never caused a disaster: "Lyle! Come with me. We are delighted with our new livingroom."

It was quite embarrassing, because Mrs. Moody was right behind him, and took one look at my scruffy sneakers and grumbled, "Why are you letting him in here?"

I had to follow Prexy and listen to his pride in the new ceiling, new wall paper, and all woodwork fresh painted: "The room is brand new. We can hardly believe it! We've been clamoring at Buildings and Grounds for years, but couldn't budge them."

I tried to share his pleasure, but with Mrs. Moody hovering in the doorway to give orders, I could hardly match his exuberance, which was largely, I feared, for my sake. I was glad when he let me tiptoe back past Mrs. Moody and with her across the front lawn and around the south wing to the flower beds, where somebody had wheeled out the iron wheelbarrow I filled with hot ashes on New Years. Leaning against it were a steel-toothed rake and a mediumhandled digging fork, and lying in the bed of the barrow were metal clippers and a claw-toothed hand weeder.

Mrs. Moody stood back to make sure I knew what I was doing, and I got down on hands and knees and began loosening witchgrass from around the border, a fairly easy job because that morning's student worker had already raked and carried away last fall's leaves, and the half-inch knifeblades of lily-of-the-valley were barely poking out of the soil. I got right in around them with the digger and my fingers and loosened long streamers of witchgrass, and pulled them away without stirring the roots of the flowers. After I raised a yard-long grubwhite cable sprouting with grassblades, I reached for the clippers and cut it free where it fed into the bed from the lawn. Then I stood and gently lifted it away from the greenmantled swordpoints thrusting into daylight. It was a battle between natural contenders, and I was the champion of the domesticated, more vulnerable human-engineered insurgents that would be choked to death without help. I knew what I was doing because it was like helping Pop weed the flowerbeds at the Wooster cottage across the footbridge from the Lueys' in Northfield Farms on the bank of the Connecticut.

Uncomfortable, with Mrs. Moody behind me, I knew without looking when she left. She watched only five minutes, then disappeared in the direction of the cellar door. She was gone and I needn't worry about her until three hours later I collected my dollar at the kitchen door. Looking at my grubby knees and fingernails packed with garden dirt, she became cordial.

"I must say, you know what you are doing better than my last student. He couldn't tell a dahlia from a burdock."

I felt better. Back in Middle Painter, I wrapped my dirty pants and shirt with other laundry and mailed it home for Mom to have ready when I would arrive for Easter vacation.

-O-

A week before leaving for vacation, I had a letter from Janice, the first since I said goodbye to her at Lake Pleasant a year and a half ago. She asked if she could come to my fraternity dance.

"I take sewing in Home Ec. I made myself a long dress. I have been wearing your ring. The girls think I'm engaged to you. Will you invite me to your dance?" She ended it "Love, Janice"

What a crazy letter! I was tempted to send back one word: No! I put it on the table and started some homework. For American Literature I owed a back

paper on Part V of Whitman's SONG OF MYSELF, and I didn't know how to finish it. What had me bothered was the part that reads:

How you settled your head athwart my hips and gently
turn'd over upon me,
And parted the shirt from my bosom bone, and plunged
your tongue to my bare-stript heart,
And reach'd till you felt my beard, and reach'd till
you held my feet...

This was Whitman talking, but who was he talking to? It didn't strike me it could be a woman, and could I come right out and say in a paper for Cook that these were two men lying on a beach and making love?

"...plunged your tongue to my bare-stript heart" had me all hot and bothered, and was this something you wanted to discuss with your teacher?

I was irritated by Janice's letter. How could she know the Beta Kappa Ball would be Monday evening the first night after Easter? I had decided I couldn't afford it. It would cost \$10. I didn't have that kind of money. I did go last year, but hadn't planned to go this. I got out a piece of paper and started writing:

"Dear Janice,....."

I tried to think how old she was. She could be a junior. I thought she had already started high school the year before we danced together at Lake Pleasant. Something she said to Dr. John the first night after we danced, when we were standing in the pavilion before Mel and Pheenie came over.

She said, "I am, too, old enough. I'll be in my second year..." That would make her a junior this year.

I wrote "I will write home. I am coming home for Easter..."

The letter was writing itself. I could perhaps borrow the car. Perhaps Clayt would drive us. He could stay overnight here in the room. I could see if Bernice had some idea where Janice could be put up. If we came early enough Monday, Bernice could perhaps find a place for Janice to stay overnight, and she and Clayt could drive back Tuesday.

Mel came in and I showed him her letter. He said, "She could stay in Bernice's room. Bernice is not coming back until Tuesday. Mr. Cook is driving her. I'm riding back with them."

Things were being taken care of for me. I was being pulled into it. Bernice was a freshman and Mel's girl since he broke off with Pheenie. He wrote Pheenie he had fallen in love with Bernice. I saw the letter Pheenie wrote him and knew he showed it to Bernice. I didn't think if I had such a letter from a girl who gave up as much for me as Pheenie gave up for Mel, I would show her letter to my new girl, but Mel did. I doubted he ever went back to see Pheenie.

Bernice lived in Greenfield where her father, Mr. Cook, was a contractor. Whenever we were home on vacation, Mel borrowed our car to go over there so I talked it over some more with him, and he didn't think it was any great deal.

"You haven't ever asked for the use of the car."

I wrote home to the folks, and wrote to Clayt and finished my letter to Janice, surprised how easy it was. I went down to the Beta Kappa House and bought a ticket for the dance, spending money I had saved to buy a new pair of pants, but I could manage with the old ones. I would wear my Tux for the first time since Scullion's Ball last year. I didn't see how Janice could possibly know the Beta Kappa dance was the first thing after Easter. -o-

Dr. and Mrs. Barney were awfully kind to me on the way home. While I sat in front with Dr. Barney and she in back with their two children, we talked about all sorts of things. They wanted to know all about me, and I told them about living in a shanty and going to a one-room school.

Dr. Barney called me an "old-timer... Not many of our students today have had that advantage."

He had never seen a one-room school -- "...to say nothing about being in one. How does one teacher manage all eight grades and all subjects? She must be like a three-handed lumber jack." I explained to him that I knew about lumberjacks, too: "My father was a marker in a sawmill."

"What does a marker do?"

I explained how when the board came riding from the saw on the carriage, somebody had to mark it with the number of board feet.

"Pop..." -- the word popped out without my intending it to (I had been carefully saying my father and my mother) "...hardly ever used the ruler he kept in his back pocket to measure the width and thickness of the board. He could tell at a glance how wide and thick it was, and how long the board was, and would use his black pencil to jot down the number."

"Do you mean he kept a list of all the boards?"

"No, he just wrote it on the board. An inch thick, twelve inches wide and twelve feet long would be 12 board feet."

"Did you learn that in school?"

"No, I learned it in the sawmill. I don't know how I learned it. I grew up knowing it."

"Have you any idea how many of your Middlebury classmates could come up with the number of board feet in a board a foot wide, twelve feet long, and an inch thick?"

"I don't know..."

"Precious few of them, I daresay. I suppose you have some idea of the dimensions of a cord of wood."

"That would be four by four by eight."

-O-

When I got home after hitching from Greenfield, everything had been settled. They were pretty cute about it. Clayt and Larry kidded me about my girl, and Pop and Mom kept grinning behind their hands. Mel had told them about my having met Janice at Lake Pleasant two summers ago, and they had it worked out that I had been keeping her a secret. I guess they probably believed we had been writing back and forth all this time and I let it go at that.

I wrote Janice a note that Clayt and I would pick her up at her house about seven o'clock Monday morning. She had already sent directions where she lived, and I thought we could find it. She sent her phone number just in case, but was puzzled she couldn't find our phone number through Information, and I didn't bother to tell her we didn't have a phone.

Except for all those sly looks from the folks and the kidding from Clayt and Larry, it was a good week at home. Clayt borrowed my portable for some reason, and I didn't see it again till I left. I didn't care too much that I couldn't finish my paper on Leaves of Grass because I'd been keeping my nose to the grindstone, and what matter if I didn't get it done?

Of course Pop was using the car daytimes, and Mel used it every evening to visit Bernice, so did a lot of late sleeping and hardly cracked one book. Mom said she was going to put a little fat on my bones. We talked about next summer and my plan to bell hop again.

Mom didn't like that too much: "It's getting so we hardly see you summer vacation. Mel's got a job again with Mr. Tenney. I don't see why you can't."

It was too much to explain that I could earn twice as much bell hopping. I didn't know how Mel would manage, but that was his business, not mine. Pop would ride back and forth with Lawrence Hammond the two days the car would be gone.

Everything seemed to be working out perfectly till Saturday we got word from Aunt Helen that Gramp had been taken to a hospital in Pittsfield for a prostate operation they couldn't do in Greenfield. Gram was pretty worked up about it. She and Uncle Perry were driving back and forth to Pittsfield every day. Pop seemed to know that it was some newfangled operation -- something to do with growing old and needing to pass water -- some gland that swelled up and made you want to go all the time, and you couldn't.

It was the first time I ever thought of Gram and Gramp as being old. Aunt Helen seemed to feel it my duty to come out there and at least put my foot in the door. "You didn't even come home for Christmas," she wrote, as if it was a sin. "Your grandfather and grandmother aren't going to be around forever. They're not as young as they used to be. They think a lot of their grandchildren."

We talked it over and the only thing we could think of, Mel had to be in Greenfield for dinner Sunday night at Bernice's, and he would drive me out to Gram's and leave me, and Clayt would come Monday morning and pick me up to go over and get Janice. Trouble is we planned to be at her house at seven o'clock, and Clayt hasn't ever met her and didn't have much idea where she lived, so if I stayed overnight at Gram's, he'd have to come there to get me at six at the latest. It would mean an awful early start for him before that long drive to Middlebury. I could see that Mom and Pop didn't think much of the idea. We left it that Clayt would go up to Lynches' and give me a phone call along in the evening Sunday, and we'd see.

When we got to North Leverett, passing by Gramp's mill I had the same quick surge of emotion, and by the time we slewed into the dooryard, it was like all the old days when the top of my head would be taken off for being out to Gramp's. Mel and I went in through the woodshed into the summer kitchen and opened the massive door into the kitchen. Water still was running into the green

hogshed and from there into the sink and on, now, to the metal bowl of a toilet in a small room hacked off from the east end of the pantry.

The kitchen was empty. Mel was anxious to be gone, and I had a moment's urge to flag him down as he backed out of the dooryard, but he was already on his way. I went into the pantry where there were no mince and apple pies lining the shelves for Sunday visitors. I lifted the top of the cookie jar on a mouldy smell from one driedup molasses cookie. Back in the kitchen the fire was out in the firebox of the iron stove. I left the lid off and went to the woodshed and brought some kindling and tore up a Greenfield Recorder and reached down the matchbox from the warming oven and felt better when the kindling took the blaze.

By the time Aunt Helen walked in on me, some of the damp had been taken out of the air.

"I saw your car and thought it might be you. I came down hill as fast as I could. I wish now I hadn't written the letter."

"Mel went on to see Bernice."

"Yes, I saw him drive on alone. Your grandmother had an accident yesterday. She was riding to Pittsfield on the back seat, trying to get some rest. Perry hit a frost heave in the road and she was thrown up against the roof of the car, and hurt real bad, but she wouldn't admit it and wouldn't see a doctor at the hospital. Perry said she was moaning all the way home. All she can think of is your grandfather. She told Perry not to tell Gramp about the accident. She went back to see him today, and they haven't got back."

As we talked, she was sitting in the squeaky rocker beside the stove's hearth in front of the door to the ashpit, and I was at the table next to the little buttery, behind me on the wall the telephone and the striking clock ticking loudly. Even with the two of us, the room was empty.

A car drove into the dooryard. We hurried out, and I helped Uncle Perry lift Gram from the back seat and carry her into the big northwest bedroom. A lump of rags, she didn't weigh anything with her winter coat on. Aunt Helen was ahead of us turning the bed down. Gram didn't even notice who was carrying her.

I cleared out with Uncle Perry when Aunt Helen got a nightgown and started to undress her. Perry threw the car keys on the table and hurried out

through the little entry, letting the door slam. I could hear Aunt Helen's voice from the bedroom, but I couldn't hear anything from Gram.

Aunt Helen called me, and I went in there: "Can you understand what she's trying to tell me?"

I listened sharp. Gram had her face half buried in the pillow. Saliva was coming out between her lips. She kept mumbling. It sounded like she was saying "Loud."

I told Aunt Helen, "Maybe she can't hear you. She seems to be saying 'loud' only there's more to it, and it sounds more like 'lawd'."

Aunt Helen went into the kitchen and came back with a spoon and a bottle and turned Gram's face and gave her a spoonful. A dark stain like from cough syrup colored her lips. We stood there looking down, Aunt Helen with the bottle and spoon in one hand, the screw top in the other.

Gram shuddered as from a bad taste, and settled back on the pillow, and I left and went back to the table. In a few minutes Aunt Helen came out, leaving the door open a crack.

"She has dozed off from the laudanum. She ought to have something on her stomach, but since yesterday she can't keep anything down."

We sat there a while in silence until Aunt Helen tiptoed to Gram's door and listened, and came back talking under her breath, "She has dozed off, poor thing, it's the best for her."

A few more minutes and she got her coat. She was still whispering, "I've got to get along up home. Your Uncle can't fry an egg. There are potatoes in the first bottom cabinet in the pantry, and I got some bacon yesterday, in the ice box. If you want coffee there's plenty there on the shelf."

I had helped Gram enough getting meals, so I knew where things were, and Aunt Helen knew it. A heavy woman, she lumbered out through the entry, carrying a great load. She turned back before going out the door.

"And bread in the breadbox and milk and butter and cheese in the ice box. I gave her enough of a dose so she won't wake up till seven or eight o'clock come morning."

I found boiled potatoes in a bowl in the icebox, and fried me some potatoes and bacon, and made a pot of coffee then went and listened at the crack in the bedroom door: it was all quiet in there. After I had me a warm

supper and an apple from the dish on the table, I puggled the fire and took off the front stove lid and heated some water and did and dried and put away the dishes.

I carried a lamp into the sitting room and found a copy of Elmer Gantry in the bookcase and brought it out under the mantle lamp at the table. It was marked inside the cover, "Maud Glazier, 1927, her book." I'd read it before and started it again. I doubted if Gramp or Gram ever read a novel. I never met a scoundrel like Elmer Gantry among any of the Locks Pond camp meeting revival preachers, who may have been gullible, but they were honest enough in their delusions.

-O-

In the big kitchen, silent except for spring water flowing into the water barrel, I sat at the table reading under the mantle light, waiting for the telephone. Now and then I left my chair and tiptoed to the door ajar into Gram's bedroom where all was quiet. I became absorbed in Sinclair Lewis's acid description of Elmer Gantry -- so true, an American without poetry, his eye on the main chance, preying on superstition, weakness and gullibility. How could anybody be like that?

I grew tired of Elmer and put the book aside and took out my copy of Moby-Dick to look at an assignment from Doc Cook that I intended to read during vacation but had been pushing off, as if I wanted too much to be reading it, and didn't because it was vacation and I obstinately refused to dilute my freedom by doing any required reading. A sudden guilt swept over me and I did what I'd wanted all along, opened the book to the passage on The Mat Maker that Doc asked us to think about as a key passage.

I liked Moby-Dick so much. I liked Ishmael. We had already read a good chunk from the beginning, where Ishmael said, "Who aint a slave?"

I liked the way he said aint, as if he was thumbing his nose at authority. In class, Doc spent most of an hour commenting on Father Mapple's Sermon, which was supposed to be some deep allegory, but which I let slip past me, partly because I had so many sermons back when I was a boy that I didn't want even to think about them.

Doc slipped right past what interested me most, the Spouter Inn and the meeting between Ishmael and Queequeg. That was what I cabbaged onto: I

wanted somebody to tell me what it meant that they became such friends, and why did Melville have Ishmael wake up to find himself in bed with a savage who was absentmindedly rubbing his leg back and forth over Ishmael's? What did it mean later on where it said there's nothing like a bed for confidential disclosures between friends? The whole business there was all about Queequeg and Ishmael as if they were married. It seemed to me that Melville was always joshing about the most important things. I liked Doc Cook and thought he was a great teacher, but I wouldn't have dared ask him in class what it meant when there was all this business about a wedding between Ishmael and Queequeg. Was Melville just fooling around with all this? I would have liked to ask Melville himself.

And now I've come to this new assignment about making a mat, and it's Ishmael and Queequeg again. I had watched weaving, and knew what a loom was, and the difference between warp and woof. Although I didn't like words like determinism because they seemed so abstractly important, I got the drift of what was going on. It made me think about my own life. I liked it that these two friends brought up the subject whether it was any use to rebel against the kind of life you were born into, or the chain of events that had you in tow. I hadn't the slightest doubt that I would be able to make a new kind of life for myself.

The shrill of the telephone cut into the quiet darkness beyond the pool of light from the lamp. I stood up quick and grabbed the receiver from its hook, and heard Clayt's voice loud and clear, but kept my own voice down while I told him how sick Gram was. I left the phone for a minute to listen at her door and she seemed not to have stirred. I came back. Clayt told me Pop and Mom thought it too much for him to drive all the way to Athol to pick up Janice before coming to Leverett. They wanted me to use Gramp's car to go get her and have her with me when Clayt came at seven.

"I can't ask for permission. I can't wake Gram."

"What difference does it make? You'll be there and back before she wakes up."

"I'd have to be in Athol by five o'clock in order to rouse Janice and get her started by six."

"Give her a call."

"You mean, right now?"

"Why not? It's only nine o'clock."

"I can't just barge in and push her around."

"You can bet your boots she's up and around getting ready."

"I'm a good mind to call her and call it all off."

"Don't be foolish!"

His voice sounded loud. I said, "Wait a minute" and went to the door and listened, but the phone call hadn't waked Gram. Coming back, I saw the car keys where Uncle Perry threw them on the table. From where the receiver hung down at the end of its cord, I could hear a buzz/crackle as if the electric current was trying to get out and be free, and I wondered if Central was getting an earful.

"What did the folks say?"

"They don't mind your having the car but just think it's too much for me to take the trip to Athol. By the time I go there and get her, it will be ten o'clock before I reach Gramp's and besides I haven't the slightest idea who she is and how to find her. It's better you do it."

"I don't like taking the car this way without asking."

"If you could ask, what would Gram say?"

"I suppose she wouldn't mind."

"You know she wouldn't."

It seemed settled. He said, "I'll be there at seven."

That clinched it. I couldn't argue with him. I said Goodbye, he said Goodbye, and I hung up.

I went and listened at the door, and came back and walked ont through the entry into the night, and along the side road past the coal kilns to the little bridge over Sawmill River. Looking up to Aunt Helen's and Uncle Perry's, it was all dark there, and I didn't want to go up and wake them. Besides it wasn't their car and if they said No, where would I be? I couldn't call Clayt back without waking up the Lynches and rousing somebody to go down to our house.

The night was fresh and clean. Under a skyful of stars, the moon was sailing toward the dark clump of pines on cemetery hill.

I went back in and rang up Janice, the first time I'd heard her voice in more than a year and a half, and I couldn't tell whether she had changed. She was staying up late to finish her dress where she had to put in a tuck, whatever that

meant. She sounded eager and nice. I told her my story and that we would have to leave her house by five-thirty.

"Oh, dear, I was counting on the time."

-O-

It was easy to find her house because the neighborhood was dark, so I made for a house with lights on. It was five-fifteen. The whole front downstairs was lighted up. Mrs. Damour came to the door shouting "Lyle!" as if it could be somebody else. She gave me a hug and a kiss and called Janice, who looked just the same, hardly any older, eager and nice. I hoped she wouldn't kiss me. She didn't. She was wearing a sweater and skirt and saddle shoes and her hair looked crimped.

Mrs. Damour said, "I bet you haven't had breakfast. I want the two of you to just sit down and have breakfast."

She was fussing at the stove, beating eggs into a panful of milk and the smell of coffee was in the air. After my drive, wondering if I could find the way, I was really hungry. We had a banana and scrambled eggs and toast and coffee, with Janice only pecking at her food, I gobbling mine.

Two suitcases were open on the floor, and Mrs. Damour went look at them.

"Do you have everything in?"

Janice went over there and looked down at the clothes in one of them, closed it, and while Janice sat on the cover her mother snapped the lock and fastened the straps, then they closed the other the same way. I got up and hefted them and started to the door with them.

Mrs. Damour said, "You shouldn't carry them both at once."

"They carry best if you balance them against each other."

Janice opened the door, and I carried them to the Buick and unlocked the trunk, and lifted in the suitcases one at a time, storing them on their sides where they couldn't tip over. When I shut the lid of the trunk, it was quarter to six.

Janice went into the house and came back with a small carrying case and I opened the passenger door, and she got a long hug from her mother and got in.

I said, "Thanks for the breakfast."

Mrs. Damour went over and gave Janice a kiss. She said, "Now be a good girl, and have a good time."

Not very tall, a bosomy woman, she hugged me, giving me a good squeeze. I shut Janice's door and went around and got in and started the motor and we were off -- already growing daylight, promising to be fair.

Suddenly, there didn't seem to be anything to talk about. I found my way out of Athol and on the road toward Orange and Irving while Janice snuggled down, a child, who had been up all night sewing tucks into her new dress. I paid attention to the road. At Irving I swung left over Millers River to Wendell Depot and then took the road to Locks Pond. It looked as if we would just about make Gramp's by seven.

Coasting along past the hotel at the beach, I let my thoughts drift back to Queequeg and Ishmael. Ishmael, threading the woof into fixed threads of the warp, was free will. Queequeg was standing with a sword and, when he felt like it, gave a whack to the threads of the woof, pushing them down into the cross threads of the warp that were set tight in place from the beginning, where you couldn't budge them. There was no pattern to the whacks delivered by Queequeg's sword. He gave a whack when the spirit moved him. sometimes a sharp whack and sometimes gentle. He represented Chance. What if Mrs. Fitt hadn't happened to come to the high school to raise money for us seniors? Would I ever have gone to Middlebury?

We coasted past the schoolhouse at Moores Corner, and started downhill east of the cemetery. I took the grassy track through the orchard. Ahead I could see the Ford with Clayt standing beside it talking to Uncle Perry -- and Gram! up and about! I could hardly believe it! In her coat ready to go to Pittsfield.

When I pulled up beside them, Gram was on me like a hornet. I had never known her like this.

Clayt and Uncle Perry were staring, saying nothing.

"What do you mean, boy? taking the car? How did you think we were going to Pittsfield? For all you care, we can crawl!"

She was hopping mad. Janice was sitting up and rubbing her eyes, and I had nothing to say for myself, but opened the door and walked around to the trunk, unlocked it and took out the suitcases, and carried them over to the Ford. Then I went into the house for my bookbag.

Gram was on my tail, scolding. "If you were a boy of mine, I would dress you down in the woodshed!"

I was ashamed of myself. She was hardly able to stand up, yet she was wearing herself out in rage. I opened Janice's door and helped her out and into the back seat of the Ford, then got the keys from Clayt, unlocked the trunk, and he helped me load the suitcases.

From the other side, I got in beside Janice, Clayt got in front, turned on the ignition, and we were driving out of the dooryard. There was no use saying goodbye.

When we'd changed from the Buick to the Ford, Janice's carry-on case got misplaced, and when she asked for it, I had a minute's panic wondering if we'd left it in the Buick, but then found it under my feet. She suffered from asthma, she told us, and needed some pills. I was surprised that she seemed not the least affected by the scene at Gramp's but was concerned only for her medicine. I fished up the case and passed it to her, and she opened it, and without water, quickly swallowed a pill and shut the case, then, having trouble breathing, opened the case again, poked around, located a tube, screwed off the cap, and squeezed some of what was in it up each nostril. Then she settled in her corner and almost instantly fell back to sleep, leaning toward me, head resting on my shoulder.

We traveled that way to Northfield Farms, where, not to disturb her, I asked Clayt to bring out my Corona and my laundry. Through the kitchen window, I could see him talking to Mom, who waved but didn't come out. Clayt disappeared and soon came back with my stuff and placed it on the front seat with a small suitcase that must be for him.

I would like to ask Clayt what happened at Gramp's before Janice and I got there, but didn't want to discuss it. We traveled without talking through Brattleboro and Bellows Falls and Ludlow. It was getting on to eleven o'clock when we reached Rutland, and we stopped at a dogcart and Clayt brought me a sandwich and asked if I wanted coffee. I said No and he returned to have his in the restaurant. Janice was still sleeping. I wondered if she was going to be all right, but chiefly I was not able to stop thinking about Gram and how awful I felt for having caused so much trouble.

Just short of Brandon, Janice came to, straightened up and took a compact and a mirror out of her case, and made up her face. She was breathing

better, and made a face at herself in the mirror, then another at me and said, "I'm sorry. I haven't had an attack like this for a long time."

"How are you, anyway? Are you going to be all right?"

"I'm over it. I'll be all right now."

I went over plans for afternoon and evening.

"You'll be staying overnight where Mel's girl, Bernice Cook, rooms at Professor Bowker's, Mel's Math professor. We'll drive there and get you settled, and you'll have time to rest if you want to. Or if you'd rather, we can simply drop in at the Bowkers' and give you a half hour while Larry and I leave my stuff at the dorm and come back for you.

"There'll be a late lunch at the fraternity house for visiting imports, and I've been planning on taking you there, if you feel up to it."

"I'm all right now."

"You can meet some of the other girls and my fraternity brothers. Then we can go back to the Bowkers' or I can take you and Clayt on a tour of the campus before dinner."

"If you don't mind I'd rather go without lunch or the tour and be quiet till dinner."

"We're going for early dinner at the Sergeant House, where I board. Then you'll have a couple of hours to rest and get dressed, and we'll come with the car for you. The dance is at Middlebury Inn. You can catch a look as we drive past on the way up to the campus."

I was thinking 'She's such a child. She looks what she is, a junior in high school, about to dress up in her big sister's clothes. I wonder if she's having second thoughts about asking me to invite her. I know that at her age I would've been scared to death to come to a dance at Middlebury College.' As we came through town, I pointed out the Sergeant House and the Inn. Janice made no comment about either, nor any comment as we approached the campus. At the Bowkers, both Mrs. Bowker and the professor were on hand to welcome us. I carried in the bags and introduced Janice and told them her plans. I could see they were going to take good care of her. I explained that she was tired and had decided to rest till Clayt and I came to take her to dinner.

Mrs. Bowker said, "Welcome, Janice, we're happy you're staying with us. I'll show you your room and help you get settled, and you can rest as long as you

want to. When you come back from dinner, I hope you'll let me help you dress. I'll be your big sister."

Professor Bowker chimed in, "Think of our house as your home."

I was still standing there holding the bags, ready to carry them to the bedroom, but he took them.

I bowed my way out, and Clayt and I headed for Painter, almost across the road, where Clayt would sleep in Mel's bed. I suggested he and I go down to the fraternity for lunch and come back for a nap before we go get Janice for dinner. He had already decided to spend his evening by going to the movie, then pick us up at the Inn at eleven o'clock. After lunch, I showed Clayt around campus, and when he wanted a nap, had an unexpected three hours to work on my Moby-Dick paper.

At the Sergeant House, I took Janice to the kitchen to meet Mrs. Sergeant, who unbent her crooked back and gave one of her piercing looks and cackled, "Well, I must say, you're a pretty young thing."

Out in the lobby, when I introduced her, Sarge gave me a wink, and Miss Sergeant led us to the table, where there was a corsage of tiny pink roses by Janice's plate. It was as if we were family. They were bothered because Janice ate almost nothing.

The dance itself was anticlimax so far as any flowering of romance between Janice and me. From that night I remember a half dozen things. How much I enjoyed showering and getting dolled up in my tux. How beautiful Janice looked after Mrs. Bowker helped her dress. How I was not allowed to see a smitch of her dress under a brown velvet cloak lent by her sister-in-law. How as she came downstairs from the second-floor powder room at the Inn, I was standing at the foot with Ed Bugbee, who exclaimed, "Wow!" It was a remarkable gown, its chief feature a very low neckline, with shoulders bare, and in front a great flesh-colored diamond sewn into the dark wine-red background, its bottom pointed daringly down, its top daringly up, and the other two angles disappearing under her armpits. The illusion was of a milky island surrounded by a tucked and ruffled fluff of dark chiffon, in which the girl was a vanilla gumdrop packaged for conspicuous consumption. After our first dance, I was besieged by eager petitioners to crowd their names onto our dancecard. Except for the beginning of each dance together, I hardly saw Janice again all evening. Men

were lined up to cut in on us. I took nearly every girl in the room off the hands of her partner. My chief unexpected pleasure was to dance with a girl six-and-a-half feet tall, to find her a remarkably friendly conversationalist, and her knees intentionally or accidentally kept fondling my groin. It was heavenly. I looked in vain at her partner's card, hoping to find another vacancy. On leaving Janice at the Bowker's, I got a smack from her and a whisper what a marvelous time she had, and I didn't doubt her. I had every reason to think she would have a celebration with her high school friends, and I would never again see my graduation ring.

A week and a half later, I got four testimonials to the weekend. The first from Janice, a prim thank-you prompted I felt sure by her mother.

The second was one line from Clayt: "She hived up in the back seat all the way home and I never got one word out of her."

The third came from Mom, showing ignorance of what happened out at Gramp's: "I got just a sight of your girl. She looked nice." I was grateful to Clayt for keeping his mouth shut.

The prize came from Gram:

North Leverett

April 2

Dear Lyle,

I hope you will forget what I said. I was all worked up with your grandfathers being way off there in nobody knew where until Clayton arrived. Gramp is back be sure come see us the next time you're home. I'll have some of your favrite filled cookies. Gramp and I are
Gram

Pittsfield, and
working every

proud of our g

After another week, I get a fifth letter--from Principal Lawley:

Dear Lyle,

I am most surprised and disappointed to have you

write Clayton's Biology paper for him to turn in for his own. I never thought you would do such a thing. I'm sure you know what plagiarism is. I wouldn't have expected it of you. You know as well as I that he can't type, and he is incapable of writing that well. I think you owe me an apology.

Evelyn G. Lawley, Principal
Northfield High School
Northfield, Massachusetts

I thought long over my reply. I was indignant that she thought I would cheat and angry for her low opinion of Clayt. I determined to write a high-minded missive that would shame her on both counts. I labored to achieve just the right lofty tone:

Lyle Glazier
Middle Painter Hall
Middlebury College
Middlebury, Vermont

Miss Evelyn G. Lawley, Principal
Northfield High School
Northfield, Massachusetts

My dear Miss Lawley:

Clayton borrowed my typewriter. I never saw a word of what he wrote. I wouldn't write a paper for anybody to turn in for his own. If Clayton can write so well, perhaps you ought to reconsider his grade. He has never complained to me, but perhaps you ought to get together with him and not jump to a wrong conclusion. I know he is smart and capable of doing excellent work if he feels his ability is respected.

what he wrote

Your former student,

Lyle Glazier

Chapter Twenty-Seven

June, 1931

Middlebury Inn

At the end of semester, I decided not to go home before reporting at the Inn for the summer. I sang in the choir at Baccalaureate, and on Class Day in late morning was sitting on the bench near the elevator, waiting for a checkout. Graduation week, we were crowded with alumni, who were friendly and tipped moderately well. I was glad to be safely through examinations and almost relieved to be bellhopping again.

Two weeks ago when I came to the Inn to make sure a place was being held for me, I had a small skirmish with the steward. I went first to the attic for my bellhop uniform left at the end of last summer, but couldn't find it. Back downstairs I asked the steward if he knew anything about it, but he said he had no idea what happened to it. In back of his desk was a coat rack, and I thought I saw my uniform on a hanger and went back there and it was mine.

The steward said, "Oh, that thing. I found it upstairs and took it to the cleaner. You owe me fifty cents."

"I can't pay you now. You'll get your money after I start making tips.

I took the uniform to the attic and hung it above my cot.

A fortnight later, I was sitting there on the bench thinking how I saved \$50. At the end of this summer, I'd take the uniform away with me, and store it in my room at the College. It was comforting to think I'd outwitted the steward.

From the street Hi Crommett hurried in, and came over.

"Lyle, you won the Latin/English Prize!"

"You have to be kidding! Pete White had the prize in his pocket. All first semester, his father boasted that nobody had any chance but Pete."

"I'm not spoofing. They read off your name at Class Day."

I was dumbfounded. I couldn't remember the exam except there was a sight translation that gave me some trouble. I thought it addressed a Faun, and finally tumbled that Faunus was a god of the woods and fields. By now the poem had pretty much faded from my mind.

To think that Hi, graduating this year, came all the way down to tell me. I pretended to go along with his assumption that I must have done a magnificent job, but remembering how close I came to missing the whole point of the poem, I was not so sure.

Shortly after Hiram left, Professor and Mrs. Burrage came in and went over to sit near a west window, waiting, I supposed, for the diningroom to open for lunch. I had a checkout, and was gone from the bench. Then after going up in the elevator to get baggage to stow in a car and get my tip, I came back to my station, thoughts wandering to that surprising announcement from Hi. Woolgathering, I lost track of where I was, when somebody spoke to me -- a woman's voice. I looked up and it was Mrs. Burrage, tall, columnar and wearing a fur, a regal presence. I stood up quickly.

"You are Lyle Glazier."

"Yes."

"Congratulations on winning the Latin/English Prize."

That's all she said. She turned and walked grandly back to her husband. In a few minutes they processed past the bench to the diningroom. Mr. Burrage had his nose in the air and didn't even look in my direction. They were talking calmly, talking me out of existence. I wondered what I had done to deserve it.

-O-

Abe Manell asked if I would swap shifts so he could take a course in French for summer school, explaining that if I'd take all the morning shifts, I'd be free afternoons. We'd both still work alternate evenings. He pointed out that he'd get afternoon check-ins; I'd get morning check-outs. He'd be the loser and I the gainer, because tips were better in the morning.

About a week after we made this arrangement, I got a phone call from Dean Hazeltine asking if I was interested in a job acting as companion to some rich boys from New York afternoons. The opportunity seemed tailor made. The Dean gave me an hour for an interview.

After lunch next day I went out Washington Street to the end and turned into the grounds of what looked to be an estate -- a huge woodframe house, with paint peeling from clapboards, set back from the road in a wooded grove stretching southeast. I followed a path to a side door where a short, medium-heavy middleaged woman answered my knock, not a maid I could see by her manner and rather crumpled dress. Her complexion was blotched. She looked friendly.

"I'm Eleanor Means. My father was a professor at the college a number of years ago. My elderly mother and my sister and I and two nephews always open the big house for summer. The boys are nine and thirteen. Their name is Payne, Tommy and David. Right now they're away playing tennis with a friend. What they need is a young man who can drive a car, and keep them entertained afternoons, as well as tutoring Tommy, the younger, in reading. We've heard you're an English major. Dean Hazeltine gave you a good reference. We can pay ten dollars a week for the rest of June, and on to the beginning of school when the boys will return to New York City the first of September. Their mother stayed behind in the city and is expected tomorrow."

She wanted me to meet the grandmother, and I followed her into a sitting room where the old lady was rocking and jabbing a needle in and out of a piece of embroidery.

She paid no attention to me, but looked at her daughter.

"Will he do?"

Miss Means gave a hearty answer, "I think he will do very well. This is Lyle Glazier. He will be a junior next year." She raised her voice, "HE IS A MAJOR IN ENGLISH."

The old lady said, "Humph!" and set to embroidering.

Miss Means led me back to the door. "Can you come at one o'clock? We would like you for four hours, if that is possible."

"One is fine. And five o'clock gives me an hour before I go back on duty."

-O-

The next day I was quite satisfied with myself as I approached the house, but a transformed Miss Means responded to my knock. Her dress was even more untidy, and she was distraught.

"I'm so glad you're here. We have had ghastly news. The boy's mother committed suicide yesterday afternoon. They know. You can imagine we are frightfully busy. It would be best for us if you can meet the boys and do something quiet with them, like giving Tommy his reading lesson, and then perhaps improvising some game. Not anything strenuous like tennis or golf, but maybe croquet. They can help you find the box and set up the wickets on the back lawn. They're waiting for you on the porch. If you will follow me, I'll show you."

My mind was slipping in and out of gear -- two strange boys I've not even met and I'm expected to entertain them when they've just learned their mother has killed herself.

They rose from wicker chairs as we approached, a small, scared-looking Tommy and his stringy beanpole of a brother, both very pale. I noticed a copy of The Swiss Family Robinson on a side table, picked it up and asked Tommy if this was what he was reading. He immediately opened to a page, and started reading aloud, as if having an ordinary lesson. He read fluently with good enunciation and almost no awkward pauses. David sat back and listened. After a few paragraphs, I asked Tommy to tell me about the beginning. I explained that it seemed an interesting book that I knew about but never had read. Tommy seemed glad to explain it.

I asked David if he had read it. He joined in informing me of the story, which they both knew well. They were watchful of me. I fed them one or two questions but that was hardly necessary. I simply let them talk. We began to relax.

After a while Tommy mentioned croquet, and we found mallets and balls, both stakes, and all nine wickets. They explained that the lawn sloped and there were frost heaves.

"But it's do-able," David said.

"You have to compensate," Tommy explained.

David remarked, "You give the ball a crack if you're going uphill, and let it roll down. It's not very scientific."

Chapter Twenty-Eight

Summer 1931

I was unloading the trunk of a car of a guest whose women had gone into the lobby.

"Be careful of that bag, boy, it belongs to my mother-in-law!"

Slightly tipsy, he clapped me on the shoulder, a pushover for a generous tip. I proceeded ahead of him with armloads of luggage, and waited by the elevator.

I heard a hubbub. The nightclerk was attempting to quiet a bellow that filled the lobby and disturbed the clientele streaming from the diningroom.

"I'm so sorry, sir. I am sure we can take care of you. There has been a mistake. When you had not come by seven-thirty, someone seems to have put other guests in your suite."

"But I called you from Brandon at five. You guaranteed to save our rooms."

"It wasn't me, sir."

"Well, where is that ass?"

"The afternoon clerk, sir, has gone off duty."

"Well, call the manager!"

"The manager, sir, is away for the evening. But I assure you, sir, we can take care of you. We have a very nice double for you and your wife. And we can put your mother-in-law in a comfortable room in the annex."

"Annex! my eye!"

He lowered his voice, and looked around at his womenfolks, who'd been gazing at the skyline of the college on the hill. Now they peered from the comfort of their chairs by the west window. He hissed in a whisper, "Have you ever traveled, my boy, with your mother-in-law?"

"No, sir, I have not. But..."

"You have actually given up our rooms?"

"I'm sorry, sir, it seems so."

"Well, what is the best you can offer in this hovel?"

"I'm afraid, sir, it's as I told you. I think you will be pleased..."

"Boy! I want you to get on the phone to Brandon Inn and find if they still have the suite they offered us at six."

"Yes, sir."

A conversation in low voice over the phone, while Mr. Underhill traveled to the west window to confer with his women.

He came back: "Well?"

"I'm sorry, sir. Fully booked."

Another conference with his wife. He returned.

"We're worn out with travel, and will have to stay here. But I promise you, your manager will hear about this."

"Yes, sir. If you will sign here. These two rooms, the double is very comfortable, sir. A double with bath, with view from the west window over the town. And your mother-in-law will be handsomely taken care of in the annex."

"Annex! You fool! My mother-in-law and my wife will take the double upstairs. Probably not the first time in their lives they have slept together in one bed."

He turned to call over his shoulder.

"Boy, you keep my bag -- that brown leather Gladstone -- and carry the two suitcases and the hatboxes and the two small traveling cases upstairs. No, give the Gladstone to this clerk. I don't want to come down and find it has been made off with!"

I did as I was told. The clerk stowed the bag behind the counter. I ushered the family into the creaking elevator and up to the third floor to the end of the corridor, and stepped ahead of them into the room, unfolded luggage racks, lifted the suitcases and opened both windows to the night air. The women were cowed. I was cowed. Mr. Underhill peered into the bathroom, gave a peck to his wife, and he and went back downstairs, where I retrieved his Gladstone from behind the counter, and we went out into the fresh night air. He handed me the keys of his Cadillac standing at the curb.

"You park it for me later. Where is that miserable annex?"

As cheerfully as possible, I ushered him past the parking lot, and across the road to the two-and-a-half story yellow clapboard nondescript where waitresses and chambermaids were gathered on the stairs in the cool of evening. They watched curiously the sight of a well-dressed business tycoon being ushered upstairs. We moved through the congregation to the second floor, and I opened the door on a stagnant small servant-quarter chamber with sink.

"You'll find a toilet across the hall.

"A shared toilet?"

"Yes, Sir."

He was beyond pacification. He jiggled the change in his pocket and gave me a half dollar for my time.

The next morning at nine, I was summoned. He had carried his own bag to the car and tossed it in the trunk. The ladies were subdued when I brought down their suitcases. I moved aside the Gladstone, packed in suitcases and hand luggage, making some order out of the melange. Nobody tried to put a good face on the occasion. I opened the right backdoor for the mother-in-law and right front door for the wife, and around to the driver's side, where Mr. Underhill already had the key in the ignition. At the last moment, he asked the way to the Lake Placid Club, then, relenting, took out his wallet and handed me a dollar.

I said, "Thank you, and goodbye, sir."

He grunted, turned the key in the ignition and they were gone.

-O-

The boys and I drove to Lake Pleiad, traveling in the ancient, luxurious Packard that had been reconditioned at Middlebury Garage so the engine purred like a tiger. We had unlimited credit at the gas pump. We skimmed along Route Seven south and turned left through the sparse village of East Middlebury, and entered the gorge.

I was recalling the library cataloguer at the College who once told me, "I lived in Philadelphia twenty years and never went to the Mint, and now I've lived in East Middlebury twenty years and never visited the Gorge." I offered to guide her, but she was not ready to renounce her record of abstinence.

Rollin and I hiked the Gorge one autumn Sunday as freshmen. Now at a faster pace in the Packard we started climbing the twisty dirt road, narrow and primitive, and I was again entering my element, I would have parked and got out and climbed down to rushing water, but resisted the impulse and didn't mention it. We met only one car coming down toward us, fortunately at a turn in the road where the track broadened into a parking area -- for fishermen, I supposed. Feeling like a tourist on holiday in our city clothes, I left our dust behind us in the hamlet of Ripton, "...inhabited..," I tell the boys, "by Dragons."

I pointed out the narrow road turning north toward Lincoln, the mountain we could see in the distance from their dooryard off Washington Street.

Tommy pointed out Mount Bread Loaf, "It's a loaf of bread."

David barked, "Everybody knows that, ignoramus."

We went past, on our left, the Inn cluster of antique and modern/colonial -- a Victorian inn and barn, a modern conference hall and library and outlying cottages like frosted cakes, lined up on the left side of the road, one a single story. the second two stories, and the third three, each with wide porches on three sides of each floor.

We left the mountain campus and traveled toward the mountain. I had never been free to go on one of Gramp Harrington's mountain climbs along the Long Trail, but in my mind's eye I felt I knew what the Trail would be like, for it couldn't be too different from Papa's path from the shanties up to the sawmill.

We were dressed in sneakers for the trail. I advised them to change from shorts to long trousers I had them bring along, and they wondered why until we parked the car at the brink where the road stopped climbing and dipped toward Hancock. As soon as we were in the woods, we encountered mosquitoes (hordes) and small black flies trying to crawl under our eyelids, then -- a surprise to the boys -- on a mountain top, the footpath after climbing, dipped into a marshy stretch of tropical jungle where the woods had for generations been trying to reclaim control from human predators.

The path twisted through underbrush and hurricaned branches of second-growth trees, now and then a notched treetrunk proclaiming we were indeed on the Long Trail.

"It stretches all the way to Georgia," David claimed.

Tommy added, "When I grow up I'm going to packtrack the whole length of it."

David dressed him down with "That will be the day!"

Tommy looked to me for rescue, the way I used to feel when shagging Melvin's wild pitches, but I declined to intervene. With the boys, I never mentioned my life in Northfield, they never mentioned theirs in New York. Each day, seven days a week, when I went to the Meanses we set out for explorations with no program beyond spending afternoons with each other as if, for these few hours, we put our past lives on the shelf.

It was a relief when we passed a turn in the trail and started up an incline which tipped over a brink to the edge of a medium-sized pond, densely fringed

with rushes and underwater growth that, we saw at a glance, prevented diving from shore. We would have to wade out to deep water.

We undressed quickly and drew on swimming trunks, not glancing toward the narrow flanks and concave chest cavities of the others. Our whitened skin, protected for months by winter clothing, proclaimed how foreign we were. We waded into shallow water, encountering mud that slipped between our toes, slimy and disagreeable. David warned of possible quicksand, but it was quagmire we contended with. Tommy lifted a leg from the water and scrutinized a leech, unhooked it gingerly, put it back in the water, and lifted the other leg, which had on the inside of the calf two leeches back turned on one another, each busily digging in. David lifted his right leg black with leeches, and stumbled for shore, I following on his heels, and Tommy coming more slowly, complaining "Can't we go for a swim?"

We pulled leeches from our own legs and from each other, I educating them by telling how doctors used to collect leeches, or even breed them to draw blood from patients suffering certain infirmities.

"Some places doctors even got to be called Leeches."

I didn't share with them my sudden wonder whether my Middlebury classmate, H. Simson Leach, got his name because an ancestor was that kind of doctor, just as my own ancestors likely as not were glass makers, Monsieur et Madame Vitrier, Professor Ranty would have called them. That speculation, though passing through my mind like a flash, I kept to myself, bordering too much on opening a wedge to their monopoly on their past, as I guarded mine from them.

Lake Pleiad had proven to be altogether different from the eye of heaven promised by its name. Disappointed by brackish shallows, we couldn't hope for a swim in pure spring water, and made our way back over the trail, seemingly only half the distance it had been when we first edged our way along it. At the Packard, the boys debated whether to turn up the perpendicular trail on the north side to Silent Cliff. We left that for another day. It was already getting on toward four o'clock, no time for a side excursion.

Tommy insisted, "Tomorrow we will go to Lake Dunmore where there's a beach and none of those slimy leeches that break off in the middle and leave their snouts gobbling blood!"

David yelled "Ouch! I feel like getting home fast for a soaking in a hot tub."

-O-

The next day we wore white cotton trousers and sweatshirts and played tennis on the court in back of Mead Chapel. where I was on my turf as a college student. West of the courts were faculty homes, including that of Professor Perkins. I could see him in shirtsleeves on his back lawn pushing a hand mower.

David and I were about equal in skill, and we hammered away at each other, trying to perfect overhand serves. However, I made sure Tommy had his equal time, playing with me, then with David, then with me again, because David was not very charitable.

In early summer before language schools opened, most players were students who knew me and assumed I was there with young friends. The Packard parked in the shade gave us distinction. Sometimes we spent a whole afternoon, more often we broke off after an hour and had time for a drive to the beach and a swim at Lake Dunmore, seven miles south beyond the turnoff to East Middlebury and Bread Loaf, and a mile east of Route 7. After I learned both boys were more proficient swimmers than I, I left them to improve semiprofessional skills, while I dawdled over my unschooled dog paddle and breast stroke or backstroke or what I liked most, an underwater dive into shallow water holding my breath for what seemed to be minutes, coming up for air far out, presumably beyond where any observer would expect me. The lifeguard may have watched me, but nobody was astonished how long I held my breath. When tired of swimming we spread towels on the beach, then the boys shared a cubicle and I had mine. We never undressed or dressed together. Nor beyond charge for beach and changing cubicles did we ever spend a penny on ice cream or candy or refreshment of any kind. Aunt Eleanor furnished David with enough change for spartan needs and we didn't expect or pine for more. In a very short time we became good friends within boundaries marked by our social barriers. In my private thoughts, having read Uncle Tom's Cabin, I thought of the kindly aunt as "Miz Eleanor."

For a week toward the end of summer, a mysterious Uncle Stephen appeared, distinguished, pipe smoking, a dear friend of Aunt Eleanor. He had a

teenage daughter in girl's camp in the Catskills. From the day of my interview I never caught sight of the grandmother.

At the end of summer, I had banked about a hundred dollars from taking care of the Payne boys to add to money from bellhopping. Since this year I didn't have to buy a typewriter, nor pay for my uniform, I felt well fixed for entering junior year, though short on the full amount needed to register for second semester.

I was thinking, "Some way I'll manage," when I had a phone call from Mary N. Bowles, dietitian at Hepburn Commons, my old boss from waiting on table:

"Lyle, Hepburn Commons needs a kitchen boy to help the chef prepare breakfasts and dinner. You would get your meals but no salary. You'd go on duty in the morning at five-thirty a.m., and at four-thirty afternoons. Your chief duties would be to prepare breakfast fruit, and dinner vegetables for the hundred-plus freshmen diners. There are two other helpers, my nephew Lucius Bowles and David McDermott, a sophomore. It will be by no means a strenuous job but a responsible one. We need a student who is absolutely reliable, and I thought immediately of you. You'd get all three meals a day."

I didn't hesitate a second. "Thank you, Miss Bowles, this is great load off my mind."

"It's agreed then. You'll start at the beginning of freshman week, the third week in September."

I was figuring that when I left for home after Labor Day, I could count for sure on being able to pay at least three-quarters of my expenses for junior year.

-O-

It was wonderful to be home. I had good luck hitchhiking wearing my new white sweater with M from cross country. I settled into the family as if I hadn't been away practically all the time for two years. Mel was working in the fields for Charlie Tenney, with a monopoly on the car evenings for visiting Bernice in Greenfield.

Pop and Clayton and eleven-year-old Larry were full of baseball. Charlie Shearer was grooming eighteen-year-old Bobby for Big Leagues. Charlie had closed one of his meadows to crops and marked it off for diamond and outfield. Beyond barbed wire surrounding his pasture, a herd of Guernseys were spectators and near the road there were a knocked-together three tiers of

splintery bleachers. Beyond the underpass the dirt road led to the main road and the big house from which Montagues had moved to a new house in Northfield center for Mrs. Montague to preside over the School Board. Charlie Tenney moved his wife and daughters to the Montague house from the farmhouse in the Meadow.

For the only game I attended Mom sat on the bench beside Pop who, as usual, was writing names home team and visitors in his scorebook. Clayt was catcher behind the plate, Charlie Scoble third baseman, Stanley Bistrek on first, two of the Podlenskis at second and short, Ed Tenney at center, and Lawrence Hammond --who just dropped by -- in right field. But they were short a left fielder. Charlie Shearer, letting his eye rove over the small gathering, shouted to Pop, "Where's Mel?"

"Gone to Greenfield."

Charlie let his eye linger on me in my athletic Middlebury sweater. "Who've we get here?"

To my astonishment he sent me out for warmup at left. I was sure it was a choice of desperation. I hadn't touched a baseball in over two years.

Before Charlie had a chance to discover his mistake, a truck roared to a stop in a dustcloud. The visiting team from North-field took the field.

I came in with our team, glad to be relieved of exposing how rusty I was. Clayt and Bobby were still warming up in a makeshift bullpen off to the side.

Miraculously, when we took the field for the first inning --batter up for visitors -- I didn't feel nervous. I couldn't account for how calm I felt. Perhaps it was because I hadn't much riding on the game. By this time Monday, I would be on the road to Middlebury, where I had no baseball record to defend.

Anyway, for three innings I was lucky. Nobody hit anything in my direction. I didn't get any hits, either, my turns at bats. The beginning of the fourth, somebody hit one of those highrising fly balls that seems to soar forever before it starts descending. It was obviously beyond reach of the shortstop, and I gauged it as going to fall ten or twelve feet ahead of me.

I started running, eyes lifted, yelling "Mine!"

At the same time Frank Podlenski was leaving his position at second base where he had been playing off base toward first. Obviously, he didn't feel confident of my ability. Out of the corner of my eye I could see him approaching.

Behind me to my left, Ed Tenney yelled, "I got it!"

We were all three converging on a spot about ten feet back of short, when I realized that the fly was going well over our heads and would fall behind me by at least a yard. I put on brakes, reversed my direction, turned my back on home plate and sped toward the outfield, holding my hands up in the orthodox fashion, and the ball floated down and landed in my glove. Nobody expected it, least of all me, but I didn't exhibit a tremor of my surprise. I tossed the ball to shortstop and retired to left field like a pro who has performed his customary miracle.

At the end of the inning I took care not to approach anybody as if expecting comment. Nobody slapped me on the back.

That was it till the first of the eighth. The visitors had a man on first and second, nobody on third. Frank apparently knew the batter and was geared for a hit left of second, guarding the territory well over toward third. The runner on second was taking chances. I could see Bobby eyeing him as he finished his windup, then sent a speedball. Strike one. Behind the pitcher the runners and fielders hardly budged by an inch. Bobby started his windup again with his eye on the man well off second toward third. I crept up toward second base and tried to catch Bobby's eye, but he ignored me. Another fast pitch, this one a ball. The runner seemed not to have noticed me. He had his eye on the pitcher and the second baseman, and his mind on reaching third, to be in place to bring in the winning run on any kind of hit.

I waved my hand to Clayt to see if I couldn't persuade him to return the ball to me, not to Bobby, but he had learned well over the years before my absence not to expect anything of me. There was another strike, another ball. I was feeling more confident as I felt more frustrated. Neither Bobby nor Clayt would trust me. Probably because I had nothing at stake, I was feeling like a pro. Three balls, two strikes. The runner was taking a really dangerous lead.

I waved both hands at Bobby thoroughly annoyed because I realized he wanted credit for a strikeout. Bobby looked toward the batter, he looked toward the man stealing third, he seemed for the first time to be regarding me. I hoped he was weighing the consequence if the batter got a base hit and the runner made it all the way home.

Hardly believing he would risk it, I realized Bobby had streaked the ball to me. The runner swiveled back toward second, I tossed the ball to Charlie Scoble, and we had him between us, where Charlie made the actual tag out.

We made no runs the last of the eighth, they didn't score in the first half of the ninth.

Afterwards, I was talking to Mom who seemed not to have paid much attention. Charlie Shearer came over and put his arm across my shoulder, "Up there in Middlebury they've made a ball player out of you."

A fight erupted between Bobby and a spectator, and Charlie ran to intervene. The game ended in an uproar over an old feud I knew nothing about. I doubted I'd ever again borrow a glove. This was our great sport I grew up with and in my moment of triumph, I'd become indifferent to it.

-O-

Every other night, after the late shift Bill Lieson and I sneaked into the coffee shop, lifted the cover off the ice cream compartment, loosened the lid off a fresh container, found a scoop, helped ourselves to the creamy untouched soft surface of fresh tan chocolate, and carried our heaped dishes through the steward's office, through the little door leading upstairs, climbed three flights, and squatted on the stairs spooning smooth. heavenly cool cream. We placed our empty dishes where chambermaids would see them to carry down in the morning. I waited for Bill to shower, then had mine, quickly taking care of myself at an hour when nobody would know what I was doing. It came up quick and, fondling luxuriously, I could die for it.

Chapter Twenty-Nine

1931, Fall
Junior Yr. Classes

Romantic Movement met in the same room in Chemistry where Dr. Beers held freshman survey. To illustrate the difference between neoclassical and romantic he read the first lines of Pope's Rape of the Lock and the first lines of Wordsworth's Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey... I liked the way it swung along so naturally.

Five years have passed; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain springs
With a soft inland murmur...

It carried me back to the shanties and the sound of spring water flowing under ice in the roadbed coming down from the mountain. I would like to write like that.

Then he read Wordsworth's definition of poetry -- which went "...the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling, taking its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility."

I remembered July at the Inn when I came back from an afternoon off duty all puffed up with the beginning of a poem I wrote up on Chipman Hill, and I showed it to Mr. Whitney, the desk-clerk, who knew I was writing poetry. He read aloud the first two lines:

I saw a lovely valley in the clouds

Where Lords and Ladies clad in pearly shrouds..."

What a horse laugh I got! He was laughing to himself all through the rest of the poem, which was only the start of a poem.

Now, a month and a half later, right here in class in front of Dr. Beers I was blushing. I scratched down the first line of a new poem:

Smell of the fresh-turned soil...

I was anxious to get back to Middle Painter and see if I could make something of it.

-O-

Monday afternoon sitting beside me in Pud Fish's class in Music Building was a freshman, Sarah Lou Elliot. I was there ahead of time and saw her come in. She was slight and very nervous, one of those girls who fell over her feet when she entered a room. She was afraid of drawing attention. When she sat down beside me, there were scarlet flashes playing up and down her cheeks, and the artery in her neck was throbbing. She hardly looked at me. She relaxed when I told her my name. She was from somewhere over across the Connecticut in New Hampshire. At that moment Pud Fish came in. She was so friendly and informal she made us feel good. The class had filled up. We were going to start right off writing an accompaniment for a one-line melody Pud wrote on the blackboard. She assigned the first pages in our book describing the elements of Harmony.

After class Sarah Lou walked along with me. She would be a music major.

"My mother graduated from Middlebury and was a member of Pi Phi. I just have to pledge Pi Phi. The girls are rejecting me. I'm so nervous in front of them."

She poured out this information as if she couldn't hold it but had to spill it because she was so pumped full of embarrassment.

Wednesday she was already in her chair when I came in. She looked as if she had been crying. After class we walked along again together.

"They blackballed me. It will kill mother. All I heard when I was growing up I would come to Middlebury and follow in Mother's footsteps. She was president of Pi Phi. I'm a legacy. They won't give any reason for not pledging me. I'm just too awkward. I could kill myself. I don't know how to tell Mother. I keep starting another letter and tearing it up."

I told her pledging a fraternity is not the most important thing. She looked at me as if I was crazy, and started sniveling. She had the most delicate complexion. If she looked at you, a blush would start from the roots of her hair back from her chin on both sides and spread over her cheeks like Northern Lights in August. I gave her my handkerchief, and she went away with it uphill toward Hillside, her thin shoulders hunched over her tragedy.

Sarah Lou was a better student in Harmony than I because she went to the piano and worked out her lessons at the keyboard, experimenting with all sorts of combinations. I just followed the rules and composed abstractly the same way I could do calculus perfectly by the rule but had no feeling for the principles of mathematics -- or for Harmony the way Sarah Lou had.

She was still suffering from her hard time between Pi Phi and her mother. Her mother made a trip to Middlebury to give the girls whatfor, but it didn't do any good. They still wouldn't budge from their blackball. Sarah Lou was a nice girl but awkward. I could imagine how she didn't impress those fraternity stuffshirt women looking for athletes and self promoters.

I might have asked her to go to a Saturday night dance, but I didn't have any money. You would have to pay for not only tickets but you were expected to go somewhere afterwards.

-O-

I had four full-year classes, and all of them whizzes. Each semester I had also one one-semester class, five in all. I wondered if I could keep up with them, and get up at five to be at Hepburn at five-thirty, and go back in late afternoon to work for two hours before dinner.

I was taking an advanced course in French literature without having had the intermediate prerequisite. As freshman, I took that 5-day-a-week course with Ranty because I failed to qualify for the required composition and conversation course. As a sophomore I had Ranty again, but I never got the full prerequisite for the course in literature. I had to persuade Professor Freeman to accept me.

What I wanted as a literature major in English was a course in French literature, not another in grammar, and I rationalized I was willing to sacrifice grade to get it. I didn't want an intermediate course all grammar and idiom and conversation. I realized it would be hard skipping a whole year, but I managed to persuade Professor Freeman, who was a distinguished professor who practically founded the Summer language schools, and started a Middlebury course in Paris, and built the chateau where French classes met.

We used a huge HISTOIRE DE LA LITTERATURE FRANCAISE, and although I knew he would lecture in French, it was scary to hear him say so in class. He lectured eloquently but fast, and it was hard to keep up no matter how furiously you took notes. The first day he had us take a look at the book, all fine print and chiefly biographical and literary histories of French writers from the beginning on down, forbidding to look at. Besides that we would be reading a collection of writings by modern French authors. That's what I looked forward to, but I was afraid most of the work would be memorizing facts and dates from the scholarly book and I'd hate it.

It was impossible to tell how old Freeman was but he must have been well along to have accomplished so much. He looked a bit ladylike and used his hands with graceful gestures but when I had time to think about it -- which wasn't often because he talked like a whirlwind -- I liked him. I read the assignments religiously but found it hard to remember so many abstract facts about writers whose books we didn't even look at. I told myself this was a background course that I would be going back to all my life to flesh out the literature that went with the information. But I wondered if I really would. Although I loved literature, secretly I told myself that this abstract approach was mostly waste of time.

-O-

My reason for taking Professor Bryant's course in Physics was rather peculiar. Melvin bought the book last year, went to the first class, then dropped it and took a course in economics instead. Since I never had much money for books, I decided to take advantage of this interesting book that had been lying around on Mel's desk for a year.

The first day in class I knew I'd made the right choice. It was Physics for the non-scientist. Mr. Bryant talked very casually, not at all learnedly, about the nature of our planet and the universe as it appeared to the scientist. He made us

look in the book where there were a lot of problems to solve, many of them requiring an elementary knowledge of mathematical analysis. It would be more important to think straight than to have had an immense background in trig or calculus. For example, he wondered off the cuff how many of us knew the difference between so many miles per second and so many miles per second per second. I was ashamed I didn't have the slightest idea till he informed us that one represented a way of measuring speed as we are used to think about it, while the other represents an increase in speed every second, or acceleration. If we could grasp such a difference we were on the way to doing well in the course. How many of us knew the difference between a year and a light year? Have we heard of spiral nebulae? Have we any idea of what is meant by the Quantum Theory? Does Einstein's theory of Relativity mean anything to us? All this came at us not in a scholarly manner but conversationally, as if we were just chatting around a table about data interesting to know about. I already knew I was going to be scared to death but in love with this course.

Chapter Thirty

Beginning junior

Fall 1931

One of the bonuses I got from taking Pud Fish's course in Harmony & Counterpoint was that I took a leaf from Sarah Lou and went down to practice

rooms in the basement of Music House and tried out my composition for the week. At first I felt guilty because I knew that others were paying rent for the use of these rooms. But I had no money for such frivolity, and I soon rationalized away my guilt. I was hurting nobody by using a piano when it was squatting there idle and useless. I soon began to carry along some music brought from home, and get back to work on Minuet a L'Antique and Marche Militaire. On a Sunday afternoon I felt frustrated because I had nothing special to do and this would be exactly the right time to improve my skill. I drifted over to Music House to see if someone was practicing. The front door would be locked, but I'd go down the slope along the side of the building and then try the windows of vacant practice rooms along the back side. In one window the bottom sash was unlocked, and without any effort I was able to push it up and enter the room. Soon I was pounding away, responding to some internal need to satisfy a hunger for visceral self indulgence as if somewhere down in my bowels there was a musical gland demanding to be stroked. I had only the two pieces, but it would take time to get them anywhere near back to where I left off two years ago with Miss Lincoln.

In short order, I was infected with the music, and the next weekend was back again in the same room. I began to think of that special piano as my piano, not to possess but to consider it the one I practiced on when it was free. By some magic, it seemed to be free always when I needed it. I began to go down once in a while on an afternoon weekdays. Professor Hathaway heard me one day and came down to see who was playing. He walked in on me and, without saying a word about my using the piano without permission, asked if I would like to have lessons every two weeks. He wouldn't charge for them. Pud Fish had spoken to him about my singing in the choir, but not about my playing the piano.

I went for a lesson the next week and he gave me a short, slow piece To a Wild Rose by MacDowell, where I could rationalize that musical feeling was more important than dashing technique. I loved it. He also assigned scales and arpeggios. He had just returned from a sabbatical in England where he studied with a prominent British pianist/teacher who had a new technique for improving speed. Instead of lowering wrists to concentrate the weight of the arm on the finger playing each note, he had me lift my wrist above the keyboard, freeing the fingers to fly over the keys. I had become so persuaded that Miss Lincoln's

method was right for producing deep rich tones, that I was struck with the way the new method made it easy to free the fingers from tension and let them rip and tear up and down scales. It was exhilarating. At the same time, I didn't entirely renounce Miss Lincoln's technique. Especially in the slow romantic movement of the MacDowell, I loved to bring out melody and make it sing, as if not only my upper arm but my whole body had somehow lent its force to a lyric movement.

To my surprise, Professor Hathaway seemed to like both my tip-of-the-finger scales and the depth of tone I managed to persuade from the piano when playing To a Wild Rose. He invited me to play the piece at his spring festival, and I went to work on it in earnest. I not only felt a possessiveness about the three pieces I could play, but the Music House became one of my haunts. I knew I was musically ignorant, but I didn't allow myself to be bothered. It was as if I had built myself a small province within the musical universe and had determined to be master of that infinitesimal domain. I also heard from a choir member that the Methodist Church on Seminary Street, northeast of the corner where the White Congregational Church stood, was in need of voices, and my choir colleague (a Methodist) took me there one Sunday morning for rehearsal and I became a member of that choir. I heard also about the student chorus conducted by Mme. Hayden, the ancient, retired grand opera singer, who had her office across the hall from Mr. Hathaway. She stopped me in the hall one day, arresting me with the quavering lost grandeur of her deep gone-to-seed contralto, and I became a member of her chorus.

-O-

It was as if this year for the first time, I began to be liberated body and soul, and was free to splurge on whatever luxury my spirit fancied. I read in the Campus that Professor Goodreds was holding auditions for a series of short plays and went down and found myself a small part in a Chinese tone poem. None of the actors knew Chinese. From the start we were coached in letting our voices rise and fall in a crescendo/decrescendo of modulations that had less to do with verbal than with tonal communication. At rehearsals, I had no idea what I was saying or whether I was saying anything. We were a group of peasants going into the fields with empty baskets and returning with sheaves piled on top of our heads. The student director paid no attention to the meaning of sounds

we were making, rather, he pushed us back and forth and around this way and that way on stage as if we were trees in motion swaying in the breeze. It was only at dress rehearsal, when for the first time Professor Goodreds took command, that I comprehend how fully we were only accessories to the painted setting, the quavering music of a flute, and the voices of the two stars, suppliant, willowy manikins in delicately beautiful oriental dress, and with almond eyes, jetblack hair and olive complexion. They swayed across stage like reeds in a wind. Their voices rose and fell like a waterfall. We were all of us, and the stage setting, and lighting and musical backdrop, instruments being played by the director who had known from before we came to the first rehearsal exactly the effect he would achieve.

-O-

The poem I started in Bush's class the first day of the semester appeared in the Saxonian:

Smell of the Fresh Turned Soil
Smell of the fresh turned soil
Tells me that I, living, am part of the unliving,
And the unliving part of me.
I would like to envelope the world,
To press my identity,
To claim the parentage that is mine
I know not how.
This, my bone and my flesh,
Was it not conceived in her womb,
And suckled at her fertile breasts?
"Great foster-mother!
Can't you hear my voice?
Can't you feel me pressing against you,
And digging my fingers into your side
To bring you closer,
And fuse our two beings
Into the one which we really are?"
Lyle Glazier, '33

A couple days after the poem appeared I got a letter from Dean Barney: "Dear Lyle, While I'm not a poet or a critic of poetry, I know what I like, and I like your poem."

I liked his criticism.

Chapter Thirty-One

Fall, 1931, Age 20
(Junior at Middlebury)

At five-thirty when I came around the corner of Painter and could look up the long walk to the portico of Mead Chapel, I saw her sitting there, where she had been every morning for a week since about the first of October. Again as I approached the diagonal path rising uphill to the entrance of Hepburn, she had started down the crosswalk-diagonal to McCullough Gym. I expected her. It was Mary Priscilla from Ashfield. She always said, "Hello, Lyle" in that husky voice that grabbed me.

I answered, "Hello, Mary Priscilla," but didn't linger.

I had to be around to the back door of Hepburn on the west side and down in the kitchen, not yet knowing whether it would be oranges to squeeze, bananas to slice, or grapefruit to cut in two with a butcher knife, then, with a small, sharp paring knife, cut quickly and carefully around the wedges, bite size, separated from each other by membrane. I could just give two or three haphazard clips of the knife, but didn't choose to. It took longer the way I did it.

On this job, I have taken a leaf from George Lee at the toolshop, and the first day, gave some thought to planning my routine and laying out my materials.

First I brought from the storeroom one pushcart load of five boxes of grapefruit and stacked them alongside the work table. I had a heavy screw driver ready to pry out the metal staples from corners and edges of each box as I came to it, and, if need be, a pair of pliers in case a staple was ornery. I'd learned to peel off the tissue paper wrapping, as I lifted out each of the twelve grapefruit. I spread out a whole boxful on the carving counter, and stamped flat the empty box before stacking it on the cart for carrying back to the storeroom.

Dessert plates were stacked within reach of my left hand, where I could pick two plates off the pile when reaching for a grapefruit with my right. The butcher knife was sharp and in reach of my right hand, as I held the fruit with my left and in one slice cut it in two. Then, holding each half grapefruit with my left hand, I had the paring knife ready to separate the segments. I had to keep my mind on it, for I didn't want to slice off a thumb or a finger. It didn't take long, really, to work through one box, then another, and in twenty minutes or a half hour at the most, I was ready to carry empty cartons back and get the second of two loads of five boxes I would need. A stack of serving trays were ready, too, and twelve plates were loaded on each tray, piling them as flat as possible. The loaded trays had to be carried to the dumb waiter, and started on a journey upstairs where Dick MacDermott or Luke Bowles was ready to unload it onto the long serving counter for the freshman waiters, when they'd had breakfast and came to set up tables. It really didn't take much more time to do it my way. Nobody asked me, or ordered me to get a move on. I just did it, and so far there had been no complaints.

-O-

This morning she was wearing a blue dress. You hardly noticed she was not pretty in the face because she beamed kindness and an extraordinary, absolute interest, as if for the moment you made up her universe. She had a neatly packaged body. As we approached one another, she smiled, and said so soft I could hardly hear, "A cross is a kiss."

I was caught by surprise and just smiled back at her and went on my way. I supposed she knew I didn't have a minute to dawdle.

One midmorning she was waiting after chapel. She asked if I'd like to go with her to Wagner Verein when Lance Hammond, the young English teacher from Yale, would be playing Tristan und Isolde on his phonograph. It would be

seven-thirty on the slope looking toward the Adirondacks west of Pearsons, and I agreed to meet her at Hillcrest where she roomed. It was a soft October evening. There were a couple dozen men and women students, all of whom knew each other, and Pud Fish was there and Miss Rosevear of the Spanish Department, also Dick MacDermott's younger brother Bob, a freshman who was accompanist for the Glee Club, and the slender freshman tenor I didn't know, who had been chosen for Glee Club soloist.

With only a few words of introduction, Lance cranked the record player, put on the first platter, and the beautiful music embraced us. It was the first time I heard Wagner, the first time I heard opera. As he progressed from platter to platter and act to act, Lance told just enough to give an inkling of the unwinding tragic love story.

Mary and I lay there on the bankside, often looking at each other in response to the music. I thought she had a crush on me, and I didn't know what to do about it. I liked her but I was not drawn to a relationship with her or any woman because I had only enough time for my work and my studies. Also I didn't have any money. When her left hand drifted toward mine, I didn't resist, and we lay there touching hands, which seemed to satisfy her.

Going back to Hillcrest in the dark, we talked about the story of the opera. I hid my ignorance in vague, perfunctory, rhapsodies. My response had been deep, but it would have been useless to pretend it was profound.

The weather shifted the next day to the beginning of November's rainy season, and I scuttled uphill mornings on a dead run as if out for cross country. I didn't see Mary again until one day she was waiting after chapel to give me a copy of E. A. Robinson's Tristram in which she had written the date of the outdoor concert "...from Mary Priscilla to Lyle, a perfect evening."

I read a few pages but found the poetry hard going, and quickly put it aside. As the cold rains of November set in, she was not waiting at the crossing of the two walks. I thought, rather stubbornly, I would not ever fall in love with her. I didn't intend ever to get married.

-O-

Harry Owen's class in art and his Browning class fit together because in one we studied reproductions of Italian paintings, and in the other read poems that took us to Italy. I dreamed of some day traveling to Florence to see galleries

where the work of Fra Lippo Lippi and Andrea del Sarto could be seen. The intense lives of the painters carried me far from Middlebury. The entire Italian world seemed both strange and far away and yet inside myself. Harry had a magnificent voice for reading Browning aloud and he had mastered the Browning syntax and atmosphere. I couldn't divorce the stories we read from the voice that read them.

My favorite poem, perhaps, was My Last Duchess: "She had a heart too soon made glad...I gave commands; then all smiles stopped together..."

It was strange to hear the voice reading the poem because there was both a closeness to and the right kind of distance from the emotion created by Browning. I thought that if Harry let his voice get worked up over the outrageous behavior of the Duke, our outrage would have been less. It was as if Harry deliberately held back an essential something for us to create for ourselves. I became furious. Everything, the Duke couldn't possess her the way he could possess a work of art. He seemed absolutely devoid of sympathy for the Duchess and it was never clear whether he had her murdered or whether he let her starve for lack of love and friendship.

The strangest thing perhaps was that Harry read the poem as if he himself was infatuated with the art objects by which the Duke had surrounded himself, almost as if he responded to the priceless objects more than to the woman.

We had to read parts of The Ring and the Book. Harry assigned the Franceschini version, the Caponsacchi version, and the Pompilia version, but I read the whole poem. What fascinated me was how you could puzzle over the different interpretations each narrator had of the same story, be wholly committed to one and then go on to be persuaded by another: it was like a poetical treatment of the theory of Relativity that Professor Perkins talked about in our course in Physics, but I thought Browning tipped the evidence, or perhaps it was universal human sympathy that we were inclined to identify with Pompilia. Like My Last Duchess, we wanted Pompilia to be innocent, and it was obvious that both the Duke and Franceschini were scoundrels.

It happened that while we were reading the poem, Professor Harrington of the Philosophy Department gave his famous recitation of the Caponsacchi version in the Abernathy Room. He memorized the whole monologue while on a cruise with not much else to do. He had already in other years recited the poem.

Each time, to bring it back he reread it and then let his mind go to work to let it all spin out. Although he was an old man, he dressed in a flowing robe, and slippers and wore a tight-fitting cap that gave the appearance of a tonsure. As the lines poured out, his face became young. No one could have any doubt of the absolute honesty of the young priest. At the end of the reading, I was further convinced that the Pope brought in the right verdict in declaring Pompilia's innocence.

It was probably one of the greatest stories I had ever read. There was a temptation to believe that the young wife and the priest were lovers, and the baby their child, but in spite of the temptation, you were not given that evidence. If they were in love, it was pure devotion. You couldn't very well have it both ways.

"Grow old along with me" didn't appeal to me. I couldn't imagine myself ever being that old. And, besides, I hadn't yet started to live, and I didn't want to give any of it up in order to have the wisdom of Rabbi Ben Ezra. The notes told that a Rabbi is a Jewish scholar, but I had hardly ever known a Jew, say nothing of a Rabbi. The Jews here couldn't seem to join fraternities, I wasn't sure why.

I guess why I didn't like Rabbi Ben Ezra was because Browning seemed to think it so wonderful that the old man was able to come to grips with all that suffering, as if God somehow made him suffer in order to improve his character. What kind of a God would that be?

It was totally different when Pippa passes, and we were carried away by her joy.

I heard the romantic story of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett from Dr. Beers, and now I heard it again from Harry. It made them human and courageous to think they plotted successfully to escape from her father, who was as much a scoundrel as some of the nobles in Browning's poems. The main thing was how she was able to take control of her life, a total invalid and then when she was as old as Mom, she turned her whole life around and ran away with Robert. It showed what somebody could do to make themselves over when she wanted to bad enough.

Harry added something interesting. After both poets were famous and living in Italy and had their son, they were traveling back to London. All along the way people were craning to get close to the two famous poets. Somebody

crowded in to hear what they were saying, and Elizabeth was telling Robert, "The child has dirtied his small clothes. Call the nurse to have her change him."

Her poems were quite different from her husband's. I read "The Cry of the Children," which was emotionally-gushy social criticism, but liked most "Sonnet from the Portuguese," which she pretended were translations, but which she really wrote for her husband. I thought poem number 43 one of the great love songs. In our British Poetry and Prose her poems were printed a long ways from the poems of Browning. You would have thought the editor would have put both poets together. I would have missed Elizabeth Barrett Browning if Dr. Beers hadn't called attention to her.

"How do I love you? Let me count the ways."

It was as great as Shakespeare. I wouldn't have missed it for worlds.

-O-

For our cross country race at Williams, we drove down the morning before, and were there in time for lunch and afternoon practice. Their course was all out in the country. To reach the gym you went down to the south end of Main Street, and the cross country course was south of that, most all in pasture and in one place on a long incline running uphill on a ridge that continued for what seemed to be a mile climbing gently. You came on it stretched out, I guess, about half to three quarters of the full distance into the six-mile course. It was very restful running uphill there in the country, like back home on Northfield Mountain. I liked especially the long uphill spell, because I felt best when letting my arms hang loose and I was digging into a grind. feeling the muscles in my thighs and calves tighten to the pull, and with a looseness in my chest because I was not hard pressed and breathing was natural and easy. When it went well, you were getting your whole body into it, but I didn't take my running seriously, and never yet got what Burt Perrin called a "second wind," but that afternoon on the long uphill pull at Williams I got it.

Pulling up that grinding uphill stretch along the ridge, I found myself pulling over to slip past somebody who had his head in between his shoulders just fighting it out, and to me it was easy as pie -- floating along, amazed. And especially amazed, when after passing two runners in Williams sweatshirts, I found myself pulling up on and then passing the second best runner on our own team.

Howard Bentley was tall and rangy, a natural. Coach Brown had a high opinion of him and considered him, next to Burt Perrin, the best runner we had. And here I was passing him with no effort while he was gasping and limping. I wondered if he had a twisted ankle or a cramp or a spring halt and flashed a look back at him and saw his face screwed up in pain, but he motioned me on.

I couldn't believe it how I was passing all these runners. When the path twisted back downhill toward town I was floating along until up ahead I could see where trees marked off landscaping at the edge of town. I passed a couple more Williams runners, then ahead of me could see the white sweatshirts and dark blue trunks of Middlebury runners and began to make ground on them. I caught the first one, Carl Seymour, my fellow bellhop, like me not considered a whiz. The one ahead was running doggedly, grinding it out, pumping along toward the sound of the crowd that was beginning to catch the whiff of the end of the race.

Carl and I were running neck and neck and gaining. When we came even with Burt just as we struck the hard pan a couple rods east of the finish line, we could hear cheers of the crowd gathered behind ropes on each side of the track. I was running easily till suddenly Carl reached for my left hand and yelled for Burt to take my right, and I was helpless, incapacitated, dragged along like a rag doll after I had been feeling so wonderful. Now I had no feeling at all, the three of us abreast at the finish line, a three-way first for Middlebury, but I was not in it.

-O-

Dick MacDermott and Luke Bowles lived way down at the end of a long corridor that came out at a flight of stairs leading up to the front door of Hepburn. Just before you got to the stairs, there was a door off into a large storeroom with windowwell windows high on the east and south walls near the ceiling. The boys had cots and a couple of bureaus and plenty of space. Their storeroom, too far from the kitchen to serve a useful purpose, was unused except as their bedroom. I came across it by accident when after changing back into my school clothes, I walked the length of the corridor curious where Luke and Dick disappeared after work. They weren't there when I looked in so I gave a quick glance, then took the staircase up to the front door, and never returned going to or coming from work.

-O-

Back near the kitchen, a rod or so along the corridor, opposite the great storeroom servicing the kitchen, were two steps up to a door into a bathroom, which may once have been a small storeroom. There was nothing in it except a few chairs, a workbench pushed against one wall, and a sink and shower and goodsized mirror over the sink. I never knew anybody else to use it, but sometimes when I was in there changing, Luke came along the hall and banged the door, not shouting anything meaningful, as he might if this were his bathroom and he wanted to come in. He just banged, usually once in passing, but sometimes he would drub on the door in a prolonged drumbeat, then pass along the hall laughing loudly.

The washroom off the kitchen corridor was my sanctuary where I had to undress and shower to change from my work clothes, and as I stood at the mirror facing myself, it was really the first time as a grown-up I was free to study myself. The cook and his wife snapped off the lights and went upstairs from the kitchen. There was no sound from Luke and Dick at the far end of the corridor. I was as solitary as Robinson Crusoe on his island. There was nobody in the world to have the slightest inkling of interest in what I was doing, nobody interested enough even to harbor a desire to investigate. At this hour nobody knew I was here alone by myself, nobody cared: I was alone in this room, nothing to tell the world I was in here. I had myself to myself.

Chapter Thirty-Two

1931

Party at Prexy's

The night before last classes before Christmas vacation, the Moodys invited the choir for a party at their house on South Street. Mel and I walked there together. Our junior year, it was one of those crisp winter evenings when you pulled capflaps down over your ears. Mel knew the Moody house well from being their houseboy, not only taking care of their furnace but acting on ceremonial occasions as Prexy's chauffeur. He was sent to meet important guests at the station, and drive them where they were staying, sometimes to the Inn and sometimes, if they were really important, they would be put up at the President's house.

I'd been to the house often enough -- in the fall to rake leaves from their back lawn where it sloped down toward the river, or to beat rugs in spring when Mrs. Moody was cleaning out mud and grit that has been tracked in during winter.

The annual Christmas party for the choir was the only time I was invited as a guest.

Mrs. Moody appeared and cried out "Melvin!" and then, "This is your brother!" as if she had forgotten I nearly wrecked their plumbing, or that I was forever being sent there to beat rugs, rake leaves or weed flowerbeds.

A small woman without any show except to make everybody feel at home, she showed us into the big livingroom, where Prexy was surrounded by half a dozen choir members, men and women, in front of a roaring fire in the big fireplace under the picture of Dwight L. Moody, who was still presiding there in his picture frame with his hand in his bosom, looking down as if to discover whether we were behaving ourselves.

Mrs. Moody took us to the punchbowl, where she saw to it we had a glass of punch and a cookie and a napkin, then hurried off to welcome another guest. I tried to steady my hand from shaking -- the first time I'm at her party since I made such a mess of this room I didn't want to slop punch on her carpet.

Prexy caught sight of us, made room in the circle around him, and Mel moved in and I followed. Prexy was talking to Jim Henderson, a bass, who sat beside me in choir, and Bert Smith, a tenor. They were expensively dressed in casual jackets and trousers better than anything I owned. They seemed on familiar terms with Prexy. Sophie Nunn, a soprano, dressed in a slinky, short dress like a Charleston flapper, had her hand on Prexy's arm and was listening intently to what the men were saying about a play the boys saw a year or so ago on Broadway.

Strange Interlude was a play by a young playwright Eugene O'Neill Doc Cook had mentioned in class. Jim called it a "psycho-drama" and Prexy seemed to have seen it and knew all about it. They talked of O'Neill's new play that was coming soon, such a long play and it would take all afternoon and evening, really three plays in one. You'd have to go in the afternoon to see Part One and Part Two. with an intermission between them, then you would go to dinner and come back for Part Three in the evening. I didn't quite catch the title, and they didn't seem sure. "...something like Morning Comes for Electra," Bert Smith thought.

Jim corrected him: "It's Mourning -- you know, mourn for the dead -- and it isn't Comes but Becomes and Electra is a Greek daughter of Agamemnon who is in love with her father and her brother."

I felt way over my head, as if I was swimming under water, and glad I didn't have to comment.

The livingroom was filling up and our discussion broke off. Pud Fish joined us under the portrait, and talked a minute with Prexy, then took a chair near him.

Prexy turned his back to the fire, and clapped his hands for attention. We choir members found seats on the long sofa or in one of the easy chairs, or a straight chair brought in for the party, or some girls sat on the floor, their knees tucked back. Mrs. Moody brought her knitting and Bert Smith moved out of his stuffed chair to make place for her beside the fireplace. Prexy got us to playing charades and Twenty Questions. After an hour and a half of this, Prexy egged

us on to tell stories, mostly too tame to repeat, but after a while Jim Henderson added a little spice by reciting a limerick:

An effeminate musician from Saskatch
Was very enamored of Batch,
He said, "I like fiddling
"And dancing and diddling,
"Siddown and I'll give you a snatch."

It was getting along toward ten o'clock, but nobody was thinking of leaving.

Prexy looked at Mrs. Moody and said, "I wonder if I should tell the story about Percival and Margaret?"

Mrs. Moody, who had been quietly knitting a sock, puckered her lips and half whispered in a voice clear enough for everybody to hear, "I don't think you should, dear."

There was a chorus of, "Tell it, Prexy!"

He looked again at Mrs. Moody, who shrugged and said, "I wouldn't if I were you, dear."

Everybody thought she was being a spoilsport. Sally Swift, one of the altos, started waving her hand fruitlessly, coming to the rescue of the Moodys.

She had another limerick:

There is young fellow named Bart
Who really is not very smart,
He sits on a pin
And when it goes in
Yells, "It went all the way to my heart!"

Jim Henderson was whispering to Bert Smith. They both laughed fit to kill. Everybody wanted to know what they were laughing about.

Jim said, "I had a different ending."

He won't say what it was, except that it rhymed with Bart.

Pud Fish told a story about a man making a phone call, and the fellow at the other end couldn't make out the name so the caller after shouting his name louder and louder, then shouted in desperation, "It's J as in Jaguar, E as in Elephant, S as in Swordfish, I as in Trapezoid, E as in Epidermis, R as in Roquefort..."

The man at the other end shouted back, "R as in What?" From the murmur of murmur of polite laughter, it was obvious we hadn't any of us caught the point, till Pud took pity on us: "The man at the other end has got so interested in the caller's ingenuity that he's completely lost interest in learning his name."

Prexy said, "I think I'll tell the one about Percival and Margaret." There was a chorus of "Tell it, Prexy!"

Mrs. Moody kept on knitting, but made a sour face, and Prexy sat back in his chair as if giving up.

Elly Schwartz, who had a beautiful alto voice and sang our Christmas solo, was from Germany and was apparently well enough trained to know it was time to fill a gap, so cleared her throat and said, "At home we have a new game. We call it Knock, Knock." She pronounced it K'nock, K'nock.

"Somebody comes to the door and says, 'K'nock, k'nock.' The other one says, 'Who k'nocks?' The first one says, 'Frank k'nocks.'

"The other one asks, 'Frank who?' and the first one says, maybe, 'Frankly.'

"And the other one comes back 'Frankly who?'

"And the first one is all ready for him: 'Frankly, I don't give a damn.'

"You see, as long as you can keep it going, you can stay in the game. When you can't come up with anything new, you drop out. Anybody who thinks he has a good name can pick it up. The new name can't be just a last name like Smith or Jones. It has to be something amusing you don't expect."

Bert Smith said, "Knock, knock."

Marian Jones says, "Who knocks?"

"Jim."

"Jim who?"

"Jim son."

"Jimson who?"

"Jimson Weed."

Elly wanted to know what is Jimson weed.

Bert said, "It's a kind of weed."

Elly said, "That's a good example."

Annabelle Lee tried her turn: "Knock, knock."

Sophie Nunn: "Who knocks?"

Annabelle: "Is."

Sophie: "Is who?"

Annabelle: "Is a..."

"Is a, who?"

"Is a bell."

"Is a bell, who?"

"Isabella."

"Isabella who?"

"Isabella ring."

"Isabella ring who?"

"Isabella ring my."

"Isabella ring my, who?"

"Isabella ring my cow."

Everybody is yelling, "That doesn't make sense!"

Annabelle explained, "It's a kind of pun. That's what the old farmer says when his cow gets in the cider apples: 'Is a belling, my cow.'"

Everybody snickered and groaned.

Bert Smith asked Prexy to tell the story about Percival and Margaret, we all yelling, "Tell it, Prexy!"

He was looking at Mrs. Moody. She shrugged her shoulders and kept on knitting.

"It's about this time of year. Percival is a country boy. His cousin Margaret from the city comes to visit. They go out into the barn to play. They play hide and seek, and Percival is it and finds Margaret in one of the mangers.

"Then she is it and finds Percival in the horse stall.

"It's his turn again, and he finds Margaret in the silo under the ensilage.

"Margaret finds him in the milkroom. They are getting bored with the game.

"Both are wishing there were more children playing, then they could hide in a haymow together.

"Percival tells Margaret he wants to tell her a secret. She is ready to hear it.

"He says, 'We have to go up in the haymow where nobody can hear us.'

"They go up into the farthest haymow way out over the horsebarn where there's a small room in the hay under a cobwebby window.

"Percival beckons to Margaret and she comes toward him. He is snuggling down in the hay and she snuggles next to him.

"He says, 'Promise you'll never tell what I'm going to tell you.'

"She says she won't tell.

"Cross your heart and hope to die.'

"She crosses her heart. Her heart is beating so hard she can feel it under the two sweaters she is wearing.

"Percival leans toward her and puts his mouth against her ear. He says, 'Margaret...'

"She says, 'Yes, Percival.'

"Margaret, I have to tell you...'

"Yes, Percival.'

"You won't tell?'

"I cross my heart and hope to die I won't tell.'

"Margaret, there isn't any..."

Prexy paused dramatically and looked around over all of us.

Mrs. Moody kept knitting fiercely, as if shutting out the story.

"There isn't any....there...isn't...any...Mar...gar...et, there...isn't...any...Santa...Claus...!"

A universal chorus of groans.

The girls had to be back in their dorms. Miss Ross had given them special permission till eleven-thirty, and it was just past eleven. We hurried into our clothes and went out into the cold, shouting Goodbye to the Moodys, who were standing in their doorway, wishing us all Merry Christmas.

Chapter Thirty-Three

1932, spring
Glee Club, New York

We were in New York City for Easter weekend, to stay at International House and sing there, and give a concert over WOR. Harry Owen was marvelous, making it easy for us to sing before such audiences. I didn't understand how anybody could be so at home coming out on a stage before so many people, and introducing the Glee Club: he knew just what to say and how to say it. Then he turned his back on the audience, raised his hand, Bob MacDermot struck a chord and we began.

We included a couple of Middlebury songs, one of them "Gamaliel Painter Founded Midd in Eighteen Naughty-Naught" that always brought down the house wherever we sang. At intermission we kept our places while Bob played Rhapsody in Blue that he spent the whole summer practising before coming to Midd, exactly the piece to go over big with audiences coming to hear a college glee club.

-O-

It was my first time in New York since May 1928. When Rollin Campbell and I went downtown together, I trusted him to get us in and out of the right subway stations because, living in New Haven, he had come to the

city several times. He took me to a flower show, where millions of spring flowers from all over the world were on display, for example, acres of tulips from Holland.

We spent a couple of hours wandering in and out of exhibits, smelling the damp air and different fragrances as you moved from booth to booth. The smell of thousands of roses was almost overpowering. And Lily of the Valley drove me wild.

-O-

At noontime we went into a Woolworth's for hamburger and ginger ale and Neapolitan ice cream in a paper wrapper. We happened on the theatre where Mourning Becomes Electra was playing and we wandered into the foyer and asked at the ticket office if any tickets were available. For the first two parts you went in at two o'clock and came out at six for two hours before you had to go back at eight for Part III. The only thing he had was one ticket for the evening way up in the far balcony for \$2.50. We went back out onto the street, and then I went back in and bought the ticket. That night I came back alone and found myself squeezed way up in the next to the last row of the second balcony with the stage a half mile away. I hadn't read the play and was lost in it, except I felt a powerful emotional surge that carried me along for a while until I completely lost the thread, and from then on it was just a mishmash of emotion that I couldn't piece together even on the emotional level. At the end of the play, I had been swept under by a current of feeling that I couldn't piece together to make any sense of. I went out into the night and looked up the canyons of the city and found my way to a filthy subway entrance, then rattled through the underground that came above ground just before you got to Grant's Tomb before reaching the stop for International House, where Rollin was still awake. I couldn't give him any lucid account of what I had seen and heard, but I was glad I got inside one of the Broadway theatres, and resolved to have another lick at it next year, when I intended to come back to New York with the glee club again.

-O-

Saturday noon I had an invitation for lunch with the Payne boys and Aunt Eleanor over on East 66th Street. I wore my white flannels and brand new wool sweater with the Middlebury M on it I had just won for Cross Country. In order to go upstairs I had to prove myself to the doorman, who questioned me and made a call to find whether I was expected. David was waiting at the elevator on the

eleventh floor to take me in to Tommy and Miss Eleanor. The windows of their apartment looked down on Park Avenue far below. Since it was a hot day, windows were open, and sounds of street traffic and voices billowed up from down there. All through lunch we could hear it as if we were riding on a cloud of sound high above the great city. I was facing the windows and could see nothing but shafts of skyscrapers cutting off the view. We had avocado salad and a veal chop and rolls and butter, and a glass of iced tea. For dessert each of us had a little hard cake with walnuts so thick there seemed to be nothing holding it together but walnuts and sugar like brown glass. It was very good. There was a maid waiting on table, and she took very good care of me. After lunch I stuck around a half hour while Miss Eleanor did most of the talking, telling how well Tommy was doing in Reading and that David was going to the Ethical Culture School where the Principal was a Vermonter from Bennington. Her name was Ethel Bratton. Miss Eleanor thought her a remarkable woman. I got the idea that the school was not at all religious, but was where rich people with advanced ideas sent their children.

Miss Eleanor and the boys seemed to take it for granted I would be coming back to be with them in the summer. Since Abe Manell had already told me he would like to take another French course at the summer school, I was relieved to know I could count on the afternoon job again. I had never before been in a house where everything was so spic and span and the furniture and everything was most of it so old yet so perfect you knew it had been in the family for ever. I guess they had never known anything different. Unlike me, they had never had to grub for a living and never would have to.

-O-

Afterwards I met Rollin and on the spur of the moment, we decided to go into Minsky's. I gathered he had never been in a Burlesque House and neither had I. There was a performance already going on -- a moonfaced, blank-expressed boob in ballooning trousers, and a striped patched shirt with red suspenders, came on from one side and interrupted a frowsy redhaired woman who had one leg up on a straight chair fixing her garters, her skirt lifted. The man was carrying a bulbous loaf of bread a yard long, rounded at each end, its crust brown and shiny, with deep crevices. He kept whacking her with it accidentally, poking her behind which was sagging down as she worked under

her petticoats fumbling at her garters. He was talking all the time a rigamarole of nonsense, but chiefly he was fumbling around with that oversized loaf of bread, poking at her rump or getting it caught under a fold of her petticoat. He held it with both hands out in front of him at waist level. The more the woman kept elbowing the knob-ended loaf away from her, the more it kept ruffling her petticoats. The man was obviously a clown, bumbling around making an infernal nuisance of himself. Finally she put her foot down, gathered her petticoats and, grabbing up the straight chair she had been leaning on, used it to drive him off stage.

I had never seen anything so openly salacious. As the curtain was rushed across the stage, then as quickly rushed open again, the man and woman ran back, both hollering, and he chased her across stage, the loaf of bread wagging up and down in front of him. I turned to look at Rollin with a look, I guess, of pure wonder. I was surprised to see him stand up as in response to my signal.

"Let's get out of here!" and I followed him.

We walked the length of Sixth Avenue to Central Park and visited the animals and spent the afternoon in the sun, never mentioning the burlesque show. Sunday morning we slept late, then had our half hour concert over WOR, and after a quick lunch boarded the bus back to Middlebury.

-O-

In Middlebury the next Sunday I went to rehearsal at the Methodist Church, and Mrs. Land, choir director, greeted me with a sheaf of strange music and told me she had decided we would sing a duet.

I asked her, "When?" expecting her to say, "In a couple of weeks," so I would have time to practice.

Instead she said, "This morning."

My fingers got clammy. I could hardly hold the music I shook so much. My eyes blurred over.

The organist started the prelude. Mrs. Land came to her part and sang it right off. When I came to mine, I managed my solo fairly well, though my voice trembled. When I came to the part where we sang together, I got all mixed up. We tried it over. It didn't go much better. It got on to time for the service. I couldn't see how I could do it.

Just before the first hymn Prexy and Mrs. Moody came in to the congregation. They had never visited before, at least not since I was in the choir. When it was time for the duet after the first prayer, my legs were shaking so hard I could scarcely stand. I was bad enough in my solo part, my voice trembling like anything, and I made a real mess of the duet. Mrs. Land was traveling right through it, but my voice was jumping all over except where it ought to. I didn't look at the Moodys. I didn't stick around after the service, but snuck out the vestry exit and away like a thief, as if everybody I met must realize what a failure I was.

-O-

Melvin and Dr. Moody have gone on a trip to Northfield, Melvin driving. He asked me to look in at the Moodys to see that the furnace was kept going even though the weather had turned warm. They had a new furnace since I was there last, and not much for me to do.

Charlotte Moody had come home from London where she was in charge of the London office of Doubleday. She was entirely different from Margaret, big and blowzy, where Margaret was small and charming. Charlotte was as nice as her sister, but had a bottom big enough to fill the chair D.L.Moody used to sit in at the Homestead in East Northfield. She had a belly laugh and was always joking in her deep, rather masculine voice. The last night I went there before Melvin returned, she was in the kitchen with a British couple visiting. Charlotte invited them for a weekend, and the Moodys didn't know how to get rid of them. They asked me all sorts of questions about education at Middlebury, as if they were trying to get proof that an American college was a place where an ignoramus with no family background could be admitted where in England he would never be. They seemed to be looking for living proof, and I was their example. They were very superior, especially when Charlotte left the kitchen, They wanted to know who my folks were, and where my father went to college, and what our family background was. They pretended to be very impressed and filled with wonder when I told them Mel and I were the first in our family ever to go to college.

"We think it just wonderful what you Americans accomplish!" Mrs. Updike exclaimed. "In England somebody like you from the working class would not dream of applying for Cambridge or Oxford."

When Charlotte returned, they had started quizzing me on exactly what I was learning in my courses in Education.

"In England," Mr. Updike said, "our public schools are so different. They are schools for children of families of means and cultivation. It is assumed you are already cultivated when you matriculate."

They seemed bent on taking advantage of their opportunity to give me some insight into a proper method of education. I was glad when Charlotte's return gave me an excuse to get back on campus to get to work on tomorrow's assignments.

Chapter Thirty-Four

Spring 1932

Late May

At the end of junior year my chief problem was trying to take a course in Teaching of English for senior year. Professor Adams, chairman of Education, told us a methods course was required for a certificate for high school teaching, and the English department didn't offer one. Mr. Adams advised me to go talk to Dr. Beers, and I did. Mr. Beers explained that he considered this to be primarily an Education course, not a literature course, and the members of his department

thought it not their job to teach students how to teach. Their attitude had to do with the purity of the profession.

Beers suggested that since I did well in Latin, the Latin department did offer such a course, and perhaps I could get into that course taught by Pa White, so I looked up Dr. White's schedule and waited outside the door of his afternoon class in Methods of Teaching Latin, and went in after most of the students came out. There were still half a dozen standing around the desk waiting their turn to ask questions.

He caught sight of me, and instead of continuing to confer with his students, called me over and in a not very friendly voice asked what I wanted from him. Up to this point I hadn't even thought of the fact that I got the Latin/English Prize away from his son Pete, but suddenly it mushroomed up in my mind. Rather lamely, and conscious of the audience, each wanting to get some favor, I started out, "Dr. Beers sent me over to ask...Well, really Professor Adams sent me to Dr. Beers to see whether there is any chance of the English department's changing its mind about offering a methods course next..."

Pa White didn't wait for the end of my sentence. He turned purple around the gills and exploded, "I'm sick and tired of the English department and the Education department ganging up on me and trying to get me to accommodate unqualified students in my methods class. Here you are, not a major in Latin, trying to weasel your way into my class."

I got a bit worked up myself: "I looked in the catalogue and there's nothing saying you have to major in Latin..."

"You mean to say I don't have a right to decide who is qualified, I have to take every Tom, Dick, and Harry..."

I started backing away. "After what you say, I don't want to be in your class if you've already decided you would fail me..."

"Mr. Glazier, I want you to know that any student who takes a course with me gets exactly the grade he deserves..."

I was backing out of the door. I went back to Professor Adams, and he said, "Well, I wish Dr. Beers would change his mind... You come back to see me next week, and we'll see if we can work something out."

I didn't bother to go to Dr. Beers, I couldn't see it would do any good. A week later I went to see Dr. Adams at his house on Seminary Street, a big old

brick house practically on the west slope of Chipman Hill. The woods were climbing up from his back yard. It looked like the kind of place, where the Adamses have been there since Gamaliel Painter founded Midd. Adamses have been members of the faculty from Day One.

Mr. Adams had been down to the high school and learned they were short an English teacher for next year because they had an unusually large senior class. They arranged with him to have Amy Niles teach the class first semester, and I could teach it second.

"Dr. Beers has recommended you. You won't get paid except in credit for a course in methods to be called 'Practical Work in Education' with credit earned through the Education department."

-O-

This pretty much completed my schedule for senior year. I decided to take Beerses year course in Poetry and Prose of the Victorian Period, and another year course I'd been working up to, Professor Richard Brown's course in Creative Writing I'd heard a lot about and had been looking forward to a long time. I also had to take a slew of semester courses in Education besides that substitute for a methods course in teaching English, and I decided on Doc Cook's Emerson and Thoreau and Gramp Harrington's Introduction to Philosophy first semester and Beers's Chaucer the second.

My grades for this year came in and were pretty much what I expected -- a 73 for the year in Freeman's French Literature, that I'm glad I took in spite of the fact that I hated the emphasis on memorizing all those facts about books and writers we didn't read. I got a 95 in Harmony first semester and slipped to 88 second, partly because I never caught up on work missed on glee club trips. To my surprise, my first semester 76 in Physics climbed to 85 the second in spite of the fact that there was a lot of stuff that I didn't grasp about the Einstein Theory of Relativity and the Quantum Theory. Grading by teachers was still pretty mysterious. Harry Owen gave me 88 in Browning, and I got 90 in Principles of Education. I got 87 in Beers's Romantic Movement.

After the grades were out, it crossed my mind I could mail a half dozen half-finished papers I worked on for Beers throughout the year and never finished. I thought it might give him a good feeling to know that at least I turned over some thoughts in my mind, but never got around to type up a final draft,

partly because, working in the Hepburn kitchen, I would get caught short, and find myself involved in some new assignment before I quite made up my mind how to finish an old one. I didn't follow up on that idea, because I didn't lay my hand on all the unfinished drafts, and also the idea itself the more it got pushed back in my mind, it never quite jelled to the point of getting me to act on it.

-O-

Bill Lieson came back bellhopping for the summer, and Abe Manell and Carl Seymour. We had become friends but none of us very close friends for some reason. Maybe it was because for all of us this job was only a means of getting on to a better life, and we secretly didn't admire or respect the role of bellhop, as if we downgraded anybody needing to take such a job. I was sure I liked Bill Lieson, but I could detect a certain condescension in his attitude toward me, from his having once been the son of a banker and knowing what it was to have advantages Abe and Carl and I never had.

When French summer school began, Abe took another afternoon course and asked me to swap off with him as I did last year, and of course I was glad to because the Payne boys were expected back for the summer. Bill picked up an acquaintance with a Harvard student who was taking summer courses in Spanish, and I realized he was behaving as if he had somebody on his own level. He heard about my having started going to the Music Building to practice on offnights when we both were not on duty for the evening shift. One evening we walked along through town to the campus together, he to meet his Harvard friend, and I to practice. The presidential campaign between Roosevelt and Hoover was beginning to warm up, and we were discussing the difference, if any, between the two main candidates. I mentioned Norman Thomas, and Bill said something about he was against Socialism, nothing heated, because I never heard him get heated over anything.

I didn't say much because I didn't know enough about the issues except I said, "You get right down to it, will there be much real difference between Hoover and Roosevelt?"

Bill said, "My father was a Democrat and I'm a Democrat."

I said, "My father and my grandfather are both Republicans. They hated Al Smith."

Bill said, "Yes, we used to listen to that debate over our crystal set. It bothered my father even though he was a Democrat. He used to talk about 'the Catholic Conspiracy.'"

"Well, I remember Gramp asking Pop, 'Harry did you ever hear of a Good Democrat?' and Pop said, 'Waal, I suppose it is possible there may be one but I never actually saw one.'"

I didn't tell Bill my brother Melvin was still a Republican.

We came to the split in the road at the top of the hill above the Catholic Church. I turned off to the right on the road to the Chateau, and he turned left to Painter, where his friend had a room.

A few minutes later, when I was tearing along in the Schubert Marche Militaire, there was a knock on the window, and I looked up and Bill was there with his friend. I stopped playing, and they climbed in over the windowsill. Bill introduced the two of us, and I promptly forgot the name. I told him I had lived in Middle Painter the past three years, and he exclaimed, "That hole in the wall!" Since from my point of Painter Hall was as close to Heaven as I'd ever been, I didn't take kindly to his Ivy League slam. They didn't linger. Bill was still my friend, but they were alike in their clothes and manners. When I changed from my bellhop suit, I felt dressed up, but Bill always looked rather sloppy in a way that told you he could dress better if he wanted. It took a few minutes for me to get back under the spell of Schubert.

-O-

On Friday around 8 o'clock a real big limousine drove up and it was my check-in. There was a young colored man chauffeur, and he helped me unload the luggage, and waited around while I got his passengers settled upstairs, and they sent me back down to show him where to park and take him to the annex to show him his room. He was very friendly and wanted to know where he could get supper, and I suggested Calvi's, and he wanted to know if there was a movie, and I told him "Across from Calvi's. Continuous performance. till midnight."

He asked when I would be off duty, and I told him -- because I was just spelling for Carl -- "Tonight about 9:30."

I could see he was thinking something over. He asked, "Do you ever go to the movies?"

I said, "Hardly ever. I'm saving all I can for college next fall."

It seemed to put us on a level footing for him to know I was a working man the same as he was. He was the first colored man I had ever talked this much with. He was a real nice looking dark tan and I liked talking to him.

He said, "Suppose I buy two tickets and leave one with the ticket taker and tell him you'll be along later? I'll save you a seat beside me in the balcony. Call it my tip."

I liked the idea, though it seemed peculiar. I was rather glad we weren't going there together. He was not much taller than I am, slim and well built.

I went back to the Inn and thought about meeting him, excited about it. Carl got back around nine, and relieved me and I hurried upstairs and showered. I put on some slacks and a sweat- shirt, and went downtown and picked up the ticket and went upstairs in the dark. There was a full house, but in the flicker from the screen I could make him out in the back row way over on my right, next to the wall. There seemed to be only one vacant seat, the seat beyond him, the last in the row. I squeezed past, and he gave me a bag of buttered popcorn and he had been saving his for us to have it together. We sat there munching and watching the screen. I could feel him beside me, hardly any room between seats, and we were sort of pushed together, my right leg against his left. When I squeeze my legs together and twisted to the left to make room, it seemed as if after a minute his leg drifted against mine. I stopped being much interested in the show. We were munching popcorn and sitting there our legs pressed together. In a short while, without my putting my mind to it, my pecker came up. I tried to take my mind off it but it was as if it had a mind of its own. We were sitting there munching and not touching except our legs and where the fatty tissue of our thighs was touching. Gradually, it seemed, our knees, too, nudged together. We were both holding our greasy bags of popcorn high with one hand and dipping in with the other and I was dipping into the paperbag even after I had only unpopped old maid kernels in the bottom. I kept busy licking salt off the tips of my fingers.

When lights went up quarter to twelve, I had to pull myself together with the crowd quickly emptying around us. I followed him down to the street, and we went along the south side of the park in back of the Episcopal Church and up the sidewalk past Gamaliel Painter's mansion and across in front of the courthouse to the annex. Our hips keep brushing. I was wondering how I could find an

excuse to go upstairs with him. If I had my bellhop uniform on I could be showing him to a room.

On such a hot night the chambermaids and waitresses were on the landings and even up and down the edges of the stairs, gossiping and watching us approach. We were not saying a word. I dropped a pace behind him. It was as if we were not even together. At the stairs there was just the least pause, and he turned upstairs and I went along Washington Street. I waited for a half hour out toward the end across from where there's a path up into the dark brush of Chipman Hill. Nobody came along from downtown. Around half past twelve, I crossed the street and walked slowly at first, then briskly past the annex, where the girls had gone up, clearing the stairs and landings. There was only one light showing on the third floor in a front room looking down on the sidewalk.

In the morning, the steward sent me into the back parlor to wax the floor in front of the fireplace, and Bill Lieson was on duty alone. I supposed he got that checkout. It was just as well.

-O-

I got the bell around ten o'clock one night to carry a bucket of ice up to 220. As I approached, I heard the rumble of bass voices and a woman's belly laugh I thought I recognized. I knocked and went in after a man's voice called, "Yes! Yes! Come in!"

There were two single beds, the coverlets turned down and on the one next to the window Charlotte Moody was sitting at the foot of it and a young man lying full length, his head on the pillow, and his bare feet in Charlotte's lap; on the nearer one, another young man and a slim and pretty girl beside him. Charlotte recognized me but didn't speak to me. I put the bucket on the bedside table, and the nearest man slipped me a dollar. Down at the desk Jim Owen, the nightclerk, told me it was twin brothers from New York and Charlotte and Mary Fletcher had been up there a half hour.

Every other night from then on for a couple of weeks I got called at about the same hour for another bucket of ice. After the first time, Charlotte greeted me and wanted to know how my summer was going. I told her fine, and left quickly.

Mary Fletcher's voice was soft. She was younger than Charlotte, very pretty. It crossed my mind to wonder why it was Charlotte and not Margaret, who

would be more the type you would expect to find in a room with these classy young men.

I learned it was their roadster in the parking lot. They were obviously rich. Their name was Healy, Arthur and Richard. When they checked out they were on the way to Lake Placid Club. In a little over a week, Jim told me the Inn had had word that Richard died suddenly of delirium tremens, and Arthur was coming back. He stuck around for a week, and Mary was there every night, but no sign of Charlotte. I didn't get called on to deliver any more ice.

-O-

The Payne boys loaded their golf clubs for a drive to Grosse Pointe, an estate on the Lake west of Vergennes (the smallest incorporated city in the world). David and Tommy were talking about "Aunt Jessie," who invited them to play a round of golf then go down to the private beach for a swim. They wanted me to pull in around the drive at the side of the Big House to see if Aunt Jessie was home. If so, they wanted us to go in for me to see the downstairs rooms with 16-foot ceilings. They had known Aunt Jessie for ever.

She wasn't home. David lent me a golf club, and I played my first round of golf, no good at it, but neither were he or Tommy. Most of the time we were in the rough, or tacking this way and that way down the fairway in short hops. I didn't know how many holes there were, but we gave up after the third one.

When we went for our swim, there was a very nice young woman sunning herself in a beach chair. She introduced herself as Neysa McNein. a name I recognized from having seen it in some woman's magazine, probably Aunt Maud's out at Gramp's. She was very friendly, and seemed to enjoy watching us have a good time. The first time I ever met a real author, I would have liked to tell her how much I enjoyed her writing, but to tell the truth I couldn't remember anything I read by her except her name, and I was not sure what magazine it was in.

Another afternoon we went across town to meet some other rich people called Kodjbanoff, who lived in a great house just beyond the Middlebury College athletic field on the Cornwall Road. There was a young woman there, Sylvia, whom I liked very much, and a young man with her, a student at Yale. They were at the piano where he was playing and they were both singing. When Sylvia asked whether I sang, I made the mistake of saying I was in the glee club,

so the young man asked Sylvia to play while he and I tried out some piece by a writer I never heard about called Charles Ives. It was difficult music, but the young fellow managed very well. I tripped all over myself. He asked what the glee club sang, and I told him I am the Captain of the King's Navy from Pinafore and the chorus from The New World's Symphony and Danny Boy and Home on the Range. He asked if we had auditions, and I said Yes and he said, "To get into the Whiffinpoofs, you have to prove you can sing before they accept you."

Sylvia said, "That's not fair, Alex. He's shy."

Sylvia gave me her address in Wilton, Connecticut, and made me promise to get in touch with her if I ever got there, and I promised I would.

Chapter Thirty-Five

Fall 1932

Senior

Senior year I finally joined Beta Kappa. I had to go through hazing with freshmen. Pledges were summoned to an after supper meeting at the House, and given tasks that must be completed before daylight. The rite of initiation with its archaic language borrowed from knight errantry sounded foolish coming from a voice behind a hood that couldn't conceal the identity of Milton Woodin, President of our chapter. My task was to walk out and back ten miles round trip to Weybridge and obtain a copy of the inscription on the monument in the town square. On a chance, I used a sidewalk pay phone to call Weybridge operator, and asked if she knew where I could obtain a copy of the inscription. She had a copy on file for information of tourists, and read it to me over the phone.

I had already moved from Middle Painter to my new room at the House on South Street, but couldn't go to bed there when I was supposed to be hiking out and back to Weybridge. So I went back on campus and slept in a chair in my old digs, now tenanted by Melvin and our friend Rollin Campbell. I didn't tell them what I was up to but at one-thirty went back to the House and slipped my note under the door of the Scribe and went up and crawled into my cot where my new roommates, Ed Bugbee and Red Page, had been sawing wood, I suppose, for hours.

Although I had been told my membership would be vital to the health of the chapter, as a new member the most I was called on to contribute was to act as Historian, and write to important alumni for their recollections of past years. I took the assignment seriously, and actually did enough research to write to former presidents and get from them their historical records, and gave them to the chapter scribe. Apparently, there had been a historian for years, but nobody before ever took the office seriously. When I learned there was no record to add to, I called a halt at the half dozen letters that had come in.

Our meetings were so tedious with the mixture of Arthurian ritual and bad temper between present members, that I soon stopped attending. Half the members were playing a nonstop auction bridge tournament that began every night right after tables were cleared from dinner and lasted till after midnight. I had no time for such nonsense. When I got back from Hepburn, I settled down to my books and typewriter, and banged away till two or three in the morning, then had to pull myself out at five. I came back after my last afternoon class and flung myself on the cot and fell asleep instantly and slept for a couple hours before cross country practice and time to help prepare supper in the kitchen.

-O-

Professor Richard Brown, our teacher of creative writing, was a bull of a man who heavily filled the chair at the head of the table and glowered at us, but I suspected he had a heart of gold. Because I liked the idea of the course so much I liked him immensely. I heard him at a football rally last year tell how at a major game between, say, Dartmouth and Harvard, the coach put him in to carry the ball, and he got mixed up and ran the length of the field the wrong way and gave the score to the other team in a touchback. It made a good story.

Before class began he came in, usually late, after the class had gathered and said nothing until he cleared his throat in a loud rasp, breaking in on us shooting the breeze. We heard this "errumph, ERRumph, errUMPH, ERRUMPH," and realized, sometimes belatedly, that it was time to shut up.

We could write poetry or fiction or personal essays or anything creative.

"What comes out of you will determine what comes out of the class. I'm only the moderator and don't intend to spend hours laying down rules for creative writing. At the same time I know what I like and have spent a good part of my life thinking about what makes writing 'tick.' You can expect to hear what I think. "I'll analyze yo

"We'll begin with narrative, and I'd like you to consider this advice from Henry James: in order to show, not tell, James used to talk about something he called the scene a faire -- the absolutely necessary scene dramatizing the heart of the matter. You're not going to write journalese but dramatic narrative. So don't climb up on Olympus and tell your story from an omniscient author, but you have to get in there and let it unroll from inside where somebody is living."

I looked around at Freddy Bryant and other writers for the Campus or the Saxonian or the Kaleidoscope and felt myself pretty small pickins, but I'd been looking forward to this course for two years, and intended to stick it out. I had this voice inside me that I didn't know much about except it wanted to be heard.

For our first paper, developing a narrative from our own experience, I decided to write about my experience down at Prexy's when I let the furnace idle in freezing weather and nearly froze up their house. I tried to make it dramatic, and brought Rollin into the story in order to have somebody to talk to. I told it pretty much the way it happened. I got so involved telling it I couldn't stop without telling it all. It seemed to go on and on.

The "scene a faire" happened in my narrative when Rawl and I went in the front door and smelled the warm air and heard the sound of running water and ran down into the cellar and then up to the livingroom and from there up to the bathroom where the pipes were frozen. It reached a climax when I called Margaret and she came from the Fletchers' and took over and didn't bawl me out. I stayed up all night writing while Ed Bugbee and Red Page were sleeping, and by the time I got to Margaret on the phone calling Buildings and Grounds, it was almost daylight, and I had to break off because it was time to go up to Hepburn and prepare fruit for the freshmen.

I thought it a good story, and after finishing it -- and in on time -- I could hardly wait for next class to get Dick Brown's reaction. He liked it. We wrote on it "Well visualized." His most interesting comment was something I hadn't thought of and made me feel guilty all over again:

"I hear that the Moodys were worried chiefly about the painting of the president's father over the fireplace. They thought at first it was ruined, but they have had it restored --quite successfully, I hear."

I was so proud of the story that I considered submitting it to the Saxonian but decided against it -- it brought in the Moody family too much, and they might not like that kind of exposure. The next paper was supposed to be some kind of a "mood piece," and I wrote about the Saturday afternoon library at Northfield Farms, and Miss Cowley, the librarian, living in her little house down the bank beside Four Mile Brook, over the bridge just south of the schoolhouse. I described the hushed and mouldy atmosphere of the library and the character of Miss Cowley who I made out to be a wispy, fragile Old Maid, which was what she was, living alone, no relatives or close friends. She was so shy she hardly spoke above a whisper when you went in on a Saturday afternoon. Because of her, a library became a place of mystery and discovery, and that is what I tried to put into my mood piece. I did pass that in to the Saxonian, to Amy Niles --the Editor -- and she wrote a note accepting it. I called it "The Book Lady."

Dick was already talking about our major project -- a full length short story to be submitted to the Saxonian's "Best Short Story of 1933" competition. He expected everybody in the class to submit, and suggested we start thinking about it early.

"So far you have been writing sketches. I want you to begin thinking about the difference between a story and a sketch. A story has development. It must have a beginning, a middle, and an end. It must have dramatic development and create a crisis that must somehow be dealt with an unraveling or a denouement to the satisfaction of the reader. I realize you will probably not begin your story till second semester, but I want you to start thinking about it now."

-O-

For Beers's Victorian, we began first with Tennyson, and read IN MEMORIAM, and a lot of the short poems, of which I liked best the one about

Ulysses returning to Ithaca as an old man, and then setting out on another journey: "To strive, to seek, to find, but not to yield."

I liked that better than "Rabbi Ben Ezra," who seemed resigned to take what Fate forked over for him whether he liked it or not. I liked also "Flower in the crannied wall...if I could understand, what you are, root and all, and all in all, I should know what God and man is." It reminded me of Thoreau.

When we came to Browning, I thought I knew everything already from the course of Harry Owens's, but Beers looked at the poems different. He started with "Meeting at Night" and pointed out Browning's keen observation and sharpness of language: "The quick sharp scratch of a lighted match," which took me back home and, back in the kitchen, fumbling around in the dark at the sink to strike a match to light the kerosene lamp. I hadn't expected to meet Browning in that connection.

Going on to "Parting at Morning," Beers talked about the two poems together as the way a man and a woman needed each other, and the difference between a man's life and a woman's life. It got back to what Tennyson meant at the end of Ulysses, but I thought Browning more masculine than Tennyson.

-O-

The first day of class, Doc Cook told us we would get our main grade from the 10-page research paper he expected at the end of the semester. We could write on Emerson or Thoreau or a comparison or contrast of the two, or a comparison between one of them and some other writer, say, William James, for instance.

I already knew I was going to write about Thoreau. I had an idea I would like to do something I'd been thinking about since sophomore year: I noticed that when Cook discussed one of the great passages in Walden, he stopped just short of the last sentence of it. It is the part about "I went to the woods because I wanted to live deliberately."

I noticed something Cook didn't mention -- that Thoreau at the end of it seemed to be sceptical about religion the same way I am: Cook quoted "I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life..." He spent a lot of time on that without even mentioning the last sentence: "For most men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it, whether it is of the devil or of God, and have

somewhat hastily concluded that it is the chief end of man here to 'glorify God and enjoy him forever.'"

I didn't know whether I could get a handle on it, but that was what I wanted to write about, if I had the nerve. I wasn't sure I did have because most of my classmates were pretty religious in an indifferent way, but more conventional, I think, from the way Thoreau was.

I didn't know about Cook's religion. Not far along in the course he threw out a reference to an essay called "What Pragmatism Means" by William James, and I stopped after class, and in his enthusiastic manner, he exploded, "Good. Why don't you plan to write on Thoreau and James? You may want to look at 'The Principles of Psychology.'"

I went to the library and started reading. For the rest of the semester, it seemed, I was spending every spare minute ploughing through the two long volumes. Ignorant of James, I didn't have time for anything but that one book, which I thought had to read every page of. I kept coming in on my subject at a tangent but never seemed to come to grips with it. I ended up writing a too-long paper filled with quotations not quite on the mark. Doc's brief comment when he returned it was: "Smells of the lamp." Even so, I got a grade of 87, which was probably more than I deserved.

-O-

This year Bud Newman, one of our waiters freshman year, became head waiter. As such, he was chairman of Scullions Ball. In the past, it was customary that any scullion senior working in the Commons had been automatically on the Ball committee. Bud told me in passing that his committee was so fullup there was no room for me but he hoped I would cooperate any way they needed to call on me. By now he was on all important campus activities and honors committees as well as being manager of varsity football and basketball and baseball and treasurer of the Yearbook. He had all the major kickbacks in his hands or under his control. He planned to enter Harvard Business School next year. He was also a top student as well as Big Man on Campus.

-O-

It was the first time our class could vote in a national election. I registered at the Town Clerk's office in Middlebury. To prepare, we had a bull session at Beta Kappa and invited President Moody and Ferd Mann, probably the most

active politician on campus. A Marxist, he dominated our discussion. He said it didn't make any difference whether we got Hoover or Roosevelt: "Both of them represent the upper classes and corporate Big Business, and it will be the same old bullshit."

I went upstairs and got my typewriter and wrote a letter for the Campus, where Ferd was Editor. I point out we could vote Communist or Socialist or Democrat or Republican. "I will vote for Norman Thomas, the grassroots American Socialist."

Within a week I had a letter from the Young Communist League in New York City, inviting me to join. I thought I had to answer every letter, so I wrote back that I didn't know enough about Marxism to be a Communist, and I was unsympathetic with the dictatorship we had in Russia, so I was sticking with the midwest American brand of Socialists, who wanted to keep the American way of free choice along with state control of oil, steel, forests, rivers and other natural resources, so a few greedy people didn't get a monopoly and hog the show.

With some anxiety I wondered how the League would respond, but I needn't have worried. I didn't hear another word out of them.

Thirty-Six

1932/3Chapter

Winter

During intersession between first and second semester, I had already begun working on my short story for the Saxonian contest -- a story on the tool factory. My chief character was Old Disky, but I put in also George Lee and Mel and me sitting around the work table whacking castings on the metal sounding block and tossing them into Save or Discard. Although my main character was Old Disky, I also had George telling the only story he ever told us, the one about the grapefruit and the life savers. My problem with that was the story was pretty raw, so I decided to downplay it and come at it only from the side and hint at the raw part. But the main character was Old Disky.

I wanted to get the pace and tone of what it must have been to spend your whole life grubbing for a living with nothing to show for it in the long run. I never knew for sure even if Old Disky and his wife had any children. I supposed part of the problem was he didn't know much English and nobody ever thought to ask him anything about his family at home. I was pretty sure he had a wife, but I guessed he had children to support, but they didn't enter into my story -- which

was only about the factory, and how dull it was for all of us and must have been nearly unbearable if you couldn't see any way of getting out of it. I showed Old Disky at the emery wheel grinding away rough edges from castings, but I didn't go very deep into how I sometimes spelled him and spoiled the price he got for piece work. Part of my reason for not explaining that more openly was that at the time I was put on piecework at Old Disky's machine, I had no idea why the Front Office put me on that job.

Yet I wanted the reader of my story to catch on, so I hinted at it just enough so the Bosses' intention, I hoped, couldn't be missed.

Anyway I liked the way the story was going, all on a dead level just like life in the stock room.

When classes began again and I'd been at work for a couple weeks into the semester and had about ten pages, Dick Brown called me in for a conference while he skimmed through my draft. He liked what I'd written.

"The atmosphere is just right. You are doing a good job. My only criticism is it's still more a sketch than a story. It's time now for some kind of conflict that will bring us to a climax and a catharsis. We have to have something in the way of a denouement to bring the story to a satisfying conclusion."

He had been talking to us about denouement off and on for a long time, so I agreed with what he was saying, but it changed my whole direction. Instead of continuing with the even pace, I cooked up an underground attempt to organize a Union, and Old Disky, to the surprise of everybody, turned out to be a secret agent. It changed his whole character. He got caught in the investigation from the front office and was fired. I put in a slam bang ending with lots of action and a very short anticlimax showing the devastatingly tragic effect on Old Disky and his family. I wasn't satisfied with it, because the front half went in one direction and the last half in another. I guess you could call it melodramatic, which was exactly the effect I had been trying to avoid until I had my conference with Brown and realized I wasn't producing a story but a sketch.

The upshot was that Elizabeth Higgins won the contest with what you could call a tone poem with a gentle twist of denouement that was hardly a whisper, and my story didn't even get honorable mention.

-O-

I was taking Beers's course in Chaucer, which met in the evening at his house on Weybridge Street. The girls, like Amy Niles, had a special dispensation from Dean Ross, to be excused until ten o'clock, but sometimes they had to leave in the middle of discussion. Dean Ross was diligently aware of the danger that some of us fellows would take to walking the girls back to the dormitory, but she needn't have worried. We were so deep in argument when the girls slipped away that nobody noticed.

Each one of us had to give a major report. I was lucky to get The Pardoner's Tale, which was my favorite of all the tales. But I worked so hard on it, that my report came out wooden and uninteresting. I knew I was over explaining instead of letting the story just tell itself the way Chaucer told it, but I got on an explication track I couldn't get off.

It was such a simple story about greed and the love of money and how it corrupted. And in this case the three leading characters were scum to begin with. But I made the mistake of getting involved with the editor's footnotes, and strayed away from a simple analysis of the story. It was one of those times when you were watching yourself get more deeply involved in digressions, but you were helpless to stop digging your own graveyard. You kept watching yourself make an ass of yourself.

It was an all right report, but it wasn't the knockout the story deserved to have, and that I thought I was going to manage until at the very last minute I began to get bogged down in the quagmire of footnotes.

All the chief English department students were in Chaucer --Amy Niles, who was our Editor of the Saxonian as well as having the reputation of being top-ranking student, and there was a new transfer student, a junior transfer Hyatt Wagoner, who gave the most brilliant report, and John Israel Smith, another junior, a boy with an affected drawl of an accent, who Charlotte Moody thought was our best poet. And Mary Priscilla from Ashfield was also in the class, perhaps not the best student, but a good one and certainly the nicest person.

-O-

One of the most interesting things I had to do this semester was teach a class of seniors at the high school. My only real problem was, Professor Adams had said so much about lesson plans in his first semester Methods class that the first day I arrived with an elaborate set of questions that was supposed to take

the full hour, and we skipped through it in fifteen minutes, and the students didn't seem much interested anyway in my analysis that was working so hard to make seem as if it came spontaneously from them.

The next day I had much better luck, arriving with no lesson plan except copies each of an Italian, Shakespearean. and Spenserian sonnet, and we all worked together over analyzing both the form and the content and whether there was any relation between the two.

From then on, I never had any lesson plan except a couple ideas scratched on a sheet of paper.

They were a nice bunch of kids and liked to have a chance to talk and work out their own solutions. The only real trouble I had was when we had a unit on debating, and I didn't like debating, anyway, the way you debate one side of a question and then change sides and debate the other. It might sharpen the mind, but I thought it spoiled having any real convictions about anything.

I went to class with a suggestion we debate "Resolved that Middlebury High School students be given free entrance to Middlebury College football games," and the men in the class made mincemeat of the proposal, and of me for proposing it. So I shifted gears, and assigned them the problem to make up a resolution of their own. I was glad when that State Education requirement for a unit on debating was over with, because my heart never was in it.

-O-

The major chore of senior year was getting ready for comprehensive examinations. We didn't have any course or seminar to pull together what we had studied, so that job was left to ourselves, and I started early. Thinking of my courses with Beers as pivotal, I started making an outline with them as a core but also fitting in all my other English courses and then making a stab of filling gaps in between. I learned from preparing for exams in those pipe courses that systematic review did make a difference, so I set up a kind of review class for myself and spent time on it every chance I could muckle.

I tried not to let other things interfere. I had a chance to take voice lessons with Madam Hayden, who early in the semester stopped me in the corridor of Music Building, and in her quavering voice, invited me into her studio and asked if I would be Secretary for her Choral Society. I had to tell her this was my senior year and I simply couldn't steal time away from preparing for

comprehensives. She told me it wouldn't take much time, only stopping by to pick up music before rehearsals and collecting it afterwards. But I still refused. It was only then she told me I would be paid with free voice lessons, but I had been so emphatic in my refusal that I couldn't very well take it back, and anyhow, I didn't see where I could find time to practise voice, much as I would like to have had the lessons.

Halfway through second semester, we had a dance at the House, when Professor Goodreds of Drama and Professor Brown and their wives were chaperons. Professor Goodreds called me over during the evening and asked if I was interested in having a part in a musical he was about to start rehearsing. He seemed to assume I would be interested:

"Drop by my office some afternoon, and we can discuss it."

He asked where I'd been hiding myself, and I didn't tell him I was in that Chinese play he directed two years ago. By now I was so involved in my outline review for the Comprehensives that I paid no attention to his invitation, and by the time I sent word that I would drop by soon, he sent word back that it was too late I needn't bother.

-O-

One thing I didn't give up was the Glee Club. I had been looking forward to another concert in New York Easter week.

A week before that, Mary Priscilla was after me to go the weekend before Palm Sunday with her and some friends to an Episcopal Retreat at the Vermont Bishop's estate on a peninsula in the bay of Lake Champlain at the foot of Main Street in Burlington, and I rationalized I had been working so hard perhaps I could afford to. She told me it would be not a social gathering but a time of rest and relaxation and communion. The communicants had to take a vow to spend their time in contemplation, and not even talk to each other from Friday lunch arrival to Sunday lunch, after which the retreat would be over. I already had had to arrange with Miss Bowles to be away from Hepburn for the Glee Club trip to New York City Easter week, and I didn't have much hope that she would look kindly on my absence the whole weekend before, but to my surprise she was enthusiastic, even insisted on my going.

The Bishop was a big, expansive, charming man and it was obvious all the Episcopalians adored him. He entertained us for lunch that Friday and

encouraged us to talk because, he stressed, from lunch on we were supposed not to engage in conversation but to meditate, the purpose of the retreat.

I guessed I was the only one there not an Episcopalian. All the others seemed to know the Bishop and to be sympathetic with his assumption that we were all of us what he called "Anglo-Catholic." I'd never heard the phrase before, but soon gathered that he meant that somehow it was very important to understand that the real Christian Church traced its origin back not to Saint Paul but to Peter. He explained that the very word Peter comes from Latin petra -- rock and that Jesus was supposed to have said, "On this rock I will found my Church," -- meaning not Paul but Peter. Since I had been worrying the bone of deciding I was not even a Christian, this whole intense argument of the Bishop seemed not very important, and I was beginning to wonder if I hadn't been dragged into an offbeat religious harangue that had nothing to do with anything I believed.

After lunch we were encouraged to walk around the extensive grounds of the estate and look out over the rocky promontory of Rock Point across Lake Champlain to the New York shore and meditate on the significance of the word petra.

Since the girls were segregated in one building and the boys in another, I hardly saw anything of Mary Priscilla, and besides this was supposed not to be an opportunity for spooning but for thinking high thoughts. I fell in with Grant Phillips, who, like me, was often practising the piano in Music Building, and we stuck together Friday afternoon and most of Saturday and went to meals together to hear the Bishop's further thoughts on "Anglo-Catholicism" and Peter and not Paul. We pretty much kept the pledge not to carry on conversations, but did a lot of sitting on the lake shore, and looking out at the changing ripple effects as the wind played on the water. I didn't know about Grant, but my meditating had more to do with enjoying the landscape than reflecting on the condition of my soul and whether or not the greatest cathedral was St. Peters in Rome or St. Pauls in London, which seemed to be what the Bishop wanted us to thrash out and come down on his side of the debate.

By Sunday lunch time, it was clear that most of the meditators had built up quite a head of steam from high thinking, and partway through the meal, Grant gave Mary Priscilla a sidelong look and one of them giggled, and then the other

started giggling, and in a minute the giggles zinged around the table, and the Bishop was sitting there in a gale of half-muffled laughter that was no sooner controlled on one side of the table than it burst out on another, until for fifteen or twenty minutes we were swept by hurricanes of laughter.

Finally everybody was wiping eyes and trying to pull a long face, and looking apologetically at the Bishop, who kept breaking in to get back to his important final serious reflections on Jesus's laying the ground for a Church tracing its origins back to Rome. He kept foraging into his lecture during which gradually we all got back in reasonable control of ourselves. At last he wound up his argument and leaned back, benevolent and obviously satisfied, and asked, "Are there any questions?"

Nobody seemed to dare risk a question for fear, perhaps, of setting off another round of giggles. but by that time I had become so nagged by ignorance and isolation in what seemed to be an atmosphere of universal conversion to Catholicism that I burst out, "Well, sir, we Protestants..."

Such a hush fell over the table that I realized I had committed a cardinal heresy, and the Bishop quickly brought lunch to conclusion by saying a brief prayer, and we were loaded back into our bus for Middlebury.

Chapter Thirty-Seven

Spring 1933
New York City again

I was in the Metropolitan Opera House on Good Friday with standing room for Parsifal. An anonymous face in the crowd, I had borrowed an opera glass from Rollin Campbell and was gazing around at the glittering circle of tiered balconies, when in a remote box I saw Sylvia Kodjbanoff sweeping the House with her opera glass. When the sweep approached where I was standing, I waved energetically. After a minute of concentrated gaze and, I imagined, jerking her finger controlling the view finder, she was waving to me. She seemed to be telling me she would come to my level and meet me in the corridor outside where I was standing.

I conferred with Rollin, who would try to hold my place while I went out to see my friend. Meeting so unexpectedly, our reunion was like a conspiratorial conference of old friends who had been parted for a long time after knowing each other for ever. She told me she'd been coming to the Good Friday Parsifal since she was a child. She added that David and Tommy and Miss Eleanor were somewhere in the House. I told her I was seeing my first opera and going to have lunch with them tomorrow noon: "I'm in New York for our yearly concert this

evening at International House, and for Sunday morning's program over WOR radio."

"If you'll give me the exact time, I promise to listen. I would love to hear you Middlebury students, and I know from my experience that Professor Owen is an inspired director.

"Yes, and our accompanist will be playing Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue!"

"One of my favorites! I'll be sure to tune in, and to think that without meeting you here I would have missed it!"

It was such a good feeling to have this evidence that in this enormous congregation I had discovered a friend. When the warning bell came to find our places, I was glowing with the warmth of companionship.

Reclaiming my standing room and hearing under dimming lights the applause for the conductor I lost myself again in the spectacle: it was the voices that captured me, each seeming to take possession of the air with passionate gifts of melody of a three dimensional quality that flowed from them and fused with my blood and bone and marrow. For the moment my agnosticism melted away in the religion of music.

-O-

After our Sunday morning concert over WOR, we had a hurried conference in the lobby, and I felt betrayed by a vote to change the route of our return to Middlebury from announced New Haven, Hartford, Springfield, Greenfield, Brattleboro, Rutland to travel instead through Albany. When the losers complained, Harry Owen wouldn't be moved but decided for the majority. After subway fares and opera ticket, I had only a dollar and some loose change. The hitch home from Greenfield would have been less than ten miles. I had written ahead to the folks that I would be spending Sunday night there on the way back to Middlebury.

From Albany to Greenfield was nearly sixty miles if there were a direct bus line, but there wasn't. An alternate route through Springfield to Greenfield was much longer, and the only afternoon bus was scheduled for before we got to Albany. There was an early evening bus to Pittsfield, and Adams and North Adams, and I had just enough for the ticket.

I didn't admit I hadn't enough to stop overnight in a lodging because I was ashamed to tell anybody I was flat broke. Out of Albany I shared a seat with

Hank Ingersoll, whose father was Superintendent of Schools in Pittsfield. I'd have liked to be invited to stay overnight but he didn't ask me.

It was beginning to get dark as we left Pittsfield for Adams, where our tenor soloist lived. When Hank got out, Billy came to sit with me in the nearly empty bus. I knew nothing about his family. I knew Adams as a laboring town, a mill town, and Billy seemed a boy of a laboring family, not much better dressed than I. I knew his reputation for being a homosexual. The fact I was drawn toward him for that reason was perhaps an added reason for not confiding in him how broke I was, and that I had no idea how to get from North Adams bus depot (the end of the line) to Greenfield except, by shouldering my suitcase and hitch hiking.

I wanted terribly to confide in Billy. We talked about nothing consequential. I doubted if he had the slightest idea I would like to share his bed, an idea buried, hardly acknowledged. It would be absolutely impossible to confide my yearning, and I hadn't the nerve to tell him how desperate I was for supper and a place to sleep. I didn't have ten cents left even for a hotdog.

When he got down at the Adams depot, I was desolately alone. In North Adams. without speaking to anybody, I climbed down and shouldered my luggage and started hitching East along Mohawk Trail -- to the edge of town, then under an underpass onto the two-mile incline toward Hairpin Turn. It was full dark. To my left I was looking down over the diminishing lights of the town under the cover of a moonless night. Not a car passed.

Finally from behind I could hear the grinding shift into low of a truck and then its approaching growl as it drew alongside without a pause in its crawl.

Its lights dimmed and I heard the voice of the driver, as he leaned toward me, "I can't stop, but if you run alongside and climb aboard, I'll give you a lift."

What a stroke of luck! I never saw his face, but his voice was friendly as we talked of his continuing journey to Boston, and my gratitude for being saved. He was interested in everything I told him about my family, my going to college, and how I wouldn't be let out in Greenfield but ten miles farther along: "If you can let me out in Millers Falls, it will be on level ground for you and for me only three miles from home."

I learned almost nothing about him, though I felt he was middleaged and imagined him married with a family, and stuck in this job, and did he like it?

What did he see in me that made him so interested in hearing the story of a boy who once worked in a factory near where he would let me get down and walk three miles to a house without electric lights, without plumbing, without a telephone even to call home to if I had a dime for a pay phone? In the dim light of the cab, I never made out his face clearly and he never saw mine. I didn't ask his race, creed, or color, and he didn't ask mine. When we came to the turnoff to Northfield, he didn't switch off the motor. I jumped down and he passed my suitcase down to me, yelling, "Goodbye!"

I yelled, "Goodbye!" back to him.

What was he thinking? My mind was on home.

-O-

There was a light in the window. Mom and Pop had been sitting up for me, worried something may have happened. I was so glad to be there, I forgot about my troubles. Mom had saved supper in the warming oven -- dandelion greens, boiled potatoes, and a slice of green apple pie. We talked about their coming to graduation, not sure they could come. I told them they just had to.

The cleaning lady for our rooms in Painter -- where I lived three years and Melvin was still living -- sent word she and her husband would put them up at her house. All I could get out of them: "We'll see."

Monday morning we hadn't been able to settle anything for sure. I had to be on the road to hitch back to college in time to help get supper for freshmen back from Easter vacation. They were worried about the distance and about their clothes. It would spoil everything if they couldn't come.

-O-

I was putting in more of my time now preparing for Comprehensives, getting farther behind on papers for Beers, but I thought the big written and oral exam more important. I was beginning to feel good about all the extra outlining and reading I was doing. It made English literature look different if you pulled it together from Chaucer all the way through to Masfield and Gerard Manley Hopkins.

I discovered the way Hopkins put in accent marks

Margaret, are you grieving

in his poem "Spring and Fall: To a Young Child." That poem was not in our anthology, so Beers had to bring it in and put it on the board. He explained it was like Langland's Piers, the Ploughman:

In a sumer seson. whan softe was the sunne.

There were four stresses in a line instead of the five in pentameter. It gave an altogether different swing to the rhythm. Beers explained it was like Christabel:

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock

And the owls have awakened the crowing cock...

Langland was a contemporary of Chaucer. He used accent and alliteration the same way the old poets like the Beowulf poet did. Chaucer brought in the pentameter. Coleridge and Hopkins were trying to find their way back to the older kind of music. I liked it when you could put things together the way Beers did, and you could see how the movements changed down through literature, and it was not just ideas, it was music, too.

-O-

Dick and Luke and I were sitting around the table having supper before getting out the food for the freshmen waiters. The cook and his wife were busy at the stove. Miss Bowles hadn't come yet. The three of us were alone at the table. I drifted back from going over in my mind the outline I was working on for Comprehensives. I came out of it to hear Luke talking about swimming with his friends on the bank of Otter Creek.

"We're buck naked when the passenger train goes through. People are gawping down. I grab my cock and start jerking. You ought to see the women jump back."

I started drifting back to my outline, when I was shocked out of it again.

Luke said, "Did you hear about what happened to that little freshman at the Kappa Kappa House, who invited a high school student up to his room?"

Dick said, "He was the tenor soloist in the glee club. I heard that boy's father went to see Prexy and Billy Sanderson has already packed up and left. Bob told me."

i felt my own guilt standing out all over. I went for weeks without hardly thinking of sex if I was working on something, then when I was feeling high on my work, that was the time I got sidetracked into sex. I had been thinking on and off

of Billy since our bus ride together, but without doing anything to approach him, though it crossed my mind I could go to the Kappa Kappa House to see him. If I hadn't it was because I'd been too busy, but not too busy to have thought about it. But I couldn't have screwed up enough courage, as if anybody there would have known instantly why I had come.

My mind had drifted from Luke and Dick, and now it was snapped back by what Dick was saying: "I guess it was quite a shock for them to be caught together in bed like that."

Luke said, "D'juh ever see that kid in Calvi's, the one who sweeps up, and mops the floor? I was going past the other night at closing time. He saw me through the window, called me. He was after me to go down cellar to help him move a barrel, and when we got there he wanted to blow me."

Dick asked, "How old is he?"

"Oh, it's not another case of Billy Sanderson, Calvi's kid must be nineteen or twenty."

The cook called Luke to come for a kettle to put on the dumb waiter to go upstairs. Luke and Dick went about their business. I went about mine. My mind was ablaze. I was so scared about what could have happened if I'd gone to see Billy at the Kappa Kappa House, and at the same time aroused by what I heard about Calvi's chore boy.

I couldn't get away from it all the time I was working in the kitchen, showering, and when I got back to the House, I could hardly keep my mind on anything. At eleven o'clock I went around asking if anybody had any letters to carry down to the railroad station to put on the mailcatcher for the eleven-thirty train.

When I went past Calvi's I looked in the window, and the kid was in there looking up from mopping. Seeing me, he pulled off the towel from around his waist, stashed the mop and waved. He came hurrying to the door, and we were going down through the alley toward the dark grounds of the Marble Works. There in the shadows I let him unzip me. It was the first time any grownup had ever really touched me bare like this. It began to feel wonderful. I didn't touch him, just let him work on me.

When it was over and I zipped up, he said, "Go mail your letters, come back, and I'll wet it a bit."

I hurried toward the station past the dark backs of houses facing away from me out toward Depot Street across the tracks. I gave my letters to the station agent and watched him put them in the sack to hang on the pole for the baggage man to reach out and hook in as the train slowed down and glided by. I waited for the wheels to grind past slowing down, then speeding up, having every intention to walk back along Depot Street, but instead I crossed over to the ruins of the marble factory.

He was waiting in the shadows. When he dropped to his knees, I dropped my hand to push his mouth away, but he pushed in anyhow. It took longer than it did the first time.

When he finished he said, "You go on ahead. I'll follow in a minute. Come by any time."

A couple weeks later, somebody asked if I had letters to take to the train, and I didn't take his letter. .

-O-

Finally the day of the writtens, and I was not doing well. The questions were so broad I had only time to make outlines. I felt as if I didn't put any backups to my generalizations even though I wrote furiously.

"Define Romanticism by reference to writers in England between 1798 and 1850."

1798 was obviously a cue to begin with The Lyrical Ballads but I felt as if I could put in the whole time on Wordsworth and Coleridge, but I also had to bring in Keats and Shelley and Byron and I wanted to mention Mrs. Shelley and Frankenstein and talk about the difference between the writer of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage and the writer of Don Juan, and was Byron a romanticist or a neoclassicist, or both?

I was glad to be through with the writtens. I was surprised when Beers got hold of me and asked if I had any objection to Prexy Moody's sitting in on my orals.

I said No.

We met in the conference room in Chemistry around a big table. The faculty and Prexy were there when I came in. I had never had courses with Perly Perkins and Lance Hammond, nor with Cady because I never took his course in Shakespeare, though Mel took it and from what he said, it was a pipe course. I

took all the courses I could with Beers, and I had Harry Owen's Browning, and, of course, this year I'm in Creative Writing with Brown.

I expected Beers to start questioning because he was Chairman, but to my surprise Lance Hammond began by asking me if I had read the Canterbury Tales and of course I had.

"Pick out one of the tales and discuss it."

Naturally, I picked out The Pardoner's Tale that I reported on for Beers. This was almost like cheating, and I looked out the corner of my eyes at Beers but he never blinked an eye when I was sailing through the report I made in his class, though this time without the book open in front of me, I left out the foot-notes that got me tangled up and spoiled my report.

When Lance asked me to describe the Pardoner, I said, "Well, judging by the portrait in the Prologue he was as much a rascal as the three rakes in his story."

Everybody laughed, and I guessed we were off to a good start. I said, "The interesting thing is they don't die of the plague that is killing thousands of people. They kill each other off for the love of money, which is the text the Pardoner uses every time he preaches: Radix malorum est cupiditas -- 'the love of money is the root of all evil,' and there he is fleecing people by telling them they can't get into heaven without giving money to the Church when most of what he gets for forgiving their sins goes into his own pocket."

Cady broke in to ask me to describe the Summoner. I said, "He was another liar and scoundrel, as bad as the Pardoner. They made a good pair. They traveled together. One of them threatened to bring people to court unless they paid him not to, and the other one screwed money out of them scaring them through his sermons."

Cady changed the subject by asking me to describe the Summoner's complexion, and I said, "It wasn't very good. He had a 'fire-red' face, and the implication is that he has a disease."

Cady grinned and asked if there were any "distinguishing physical details in the description of the Wife of Bath?" And I said, "She was gap toothed."

I went on, "You might say that she is like the Summoner, who is 'lecherous as a sparrow.'"

I was glad nobody asked me about the Host's opinion of the Pardoner, because he considered the Pardoner to be an effeminate homosexual.

Brown wanted to know if The Pardoner's Tale was a story or a sketch, and I told him it had a Beginning, a Middle, and an End. So he switched and wanted to know three kinds of criticism, and my mind went blank. I couldn't do anything with that question. I saw him scratching something on a slip of paper.

Beers gave a high sign to Harry Owen, and we were off in a totally different direction, and that was the way the examination went. I could hardly keep up with the way we kept switching from questioner to questioner and subject to subject, but felt awfully lucky to have started with those questions about Chaucer, when I had just finished Beers's course.

Somewhere along I got a slip of paper from Brown, and glanced at it and he had written "judicial, historical, and impressionistic," but I hardly paid any attention, and pretty soon Beers had called on Perkins, whose course in Modern Fiction I never took, and he was asking a question whether when I read narrative literature I think of the stories as fiction or real life, and it was a very interesting question.

I snatched onto Rip Van Winkle from Doc Cook's course and how all that romantic business about Rip's falling asleep for twenty years and then waking up after the Revolution could be accounted for realistically because the first question he asked before revealing his identity was whether his wife was still alive. When Rip learned she died in a fit of temper at a New England peddler, then it was possible to think that this fairy tale was made up by a man who married a nagging wife and took advantage of the great American forest by disappearing into it until it was safe to come back and not be nagged to death any longer.

Perkins listened intently, and asked for another example, as if this is a very original thought of mine, when Beers interrupted to say the two hours were just about over. He asked President Moody if he wanted to ask any questions, and Prexy said he didn't.

A day or so later, I ran across Dick Brown on a crosswalk, and he told me he had learned from Warren Bower who was editing The College Writer that he had accepted my sketch on The Book Lady -- "...very good for you and good for the College."

Then he went on, "Everybody was happy with the way you handled the oral comprehensives, but I must tell you that Amy Niles wrote the best written exam. We all agreed on that. You could learn something from her. Every time she made a general statement she followed up with an example. You didn't do that. But you did by far the best job on the orals, and I can guarantee we are going to do something for you."

He didn't say what they were going to do, and we were right up tight on the heels of Commencement, and all I could think of was I'm through the last examination, and Mel and I had just had a note from Pop that they were coming:

"Your mother has a new dress. She thinks it isn't good enough but I want you boys to praise her to the skies when you see her."

Thirty-Eight

1933Chapter
graduation

Pop and Mom arrived Saturday morning just in time for Class Day. They were staying with our cleaning lady, Mrs. Racicot and her husband, up Chipman Hill on the road to Burlington. Mel and I were waiting at the top of the hill in our caps and gowns when we saw them driving up College Street in their Model A past the Catholic Church. We were standing on the corner and helped Mom get down, and then Mel went with Pop to park the car near Music House, while I walked Mom along the road in back of Painter. I was always surprised to discover how short she was and how small, and how dark she was, like an Indian. She was wearing her new dove-gray dress with tight-fitting crocheted collar and cuffs added, I am sure, by hand. I was telling her how much I liked the light gray dress she was wearing.

I was pointing out the buildings, especially Painter and Old Chapel, and telling her how old they were. Looking the other way, I pointed out the pillared front of Mead Chapel, and to the left of it Hepburn Hall and Mom was fully as much interested in that.

"So that's where you work, I wondered. It looks like a big place."

"It is a big place. That's where rich freshmen live, where I waited on table. Now I'm working downstairs in the kitchen and after Class Day will have to go up there to help get lunch ready for parents and alumni who are staying there."

We turned and walked along the sidewalk under the trees between Painter and Old Chapel toward folding chairs on the lower campus where most of the guests were already seated. Rollin had been saving two seats in the row with his sister and mother. I had already met Mrs. Campbell and Helen so now I could introduce Mom to them. By the time they were settled again in their chairs, Pop and Mel had come along and we boys had to find our place with the seniors up front near the platform, where Class Officers and President Moody and others seemed about to begin.

We were lucky in a beautiful June day, with a light breeze blowing when for the last time as students, we would sing some of the college songs. When it came to the Class Oration and Prophecy and Will it was hard to hear voices out here in the open, and I could scarcely at all hear Amy Niles when she read the class poem, but I was grateful it was her not me up there.

There was a long list of honors. All I got is was cum laude and Honors in English, more than I expected. Amy Niles got High Honors and magna cum laude. She was valedictorian, but didn't have to give a speech for it. She also got the Dutton Fellowship for the Women's College at Middlebury, and Red Yeomans got it for men. This meant they both had scholarships to study in England or Scotland for a year. Amy Niles also had to stand up to get Phi Beta Kappa, and so did Pete White and four women besides Amy. There was a long list of graduates going to graduate schools -- Bud Newman and Proctor Lovell and Dick Allen all going to Harvard Business School, Gordon Ide to pre-Med at Rochester, Phil Carpenter to Brown, Pete White to M.I.T. and Virginia Whittier to Yale School of Nursing. And a lot of others.

Hardly anybody had got a job teaching in high school. I hadn't but was still hoping. I knew this -- I was not going to bellhop this summer even though I was in debt almost a thousand dollars for loans from the College, but I was not going to pay it back bellhopping.

I still hoped I'd manage somehow to get a job in a high school. Dr. Adams sent my papers to a place called Sanborn Seminary in southern New Hampshire, practically on the coast just over from Massachusetts into New Hampshire near Hampton Beach where Uncle Howard and Aunt Maud now lived. Uncle Howard had lobster pots and he was Justice of the Peace, with an office just over a long bridge into New Hampshire, where he and a cop had set up a speed trap and between them were raking in a small fortune. I managed to get back to the folks for a minute before I had to leave for Hepburn. Mel was going to take them for lunch with Rollin and his mother and sister. I told them to be sure to save time to go with me Sunday afternoon to four o'clock tea at Dr. Beers's for graduating majors in English, and to be sure not to miss Baccalaureate Sunday noon. I wanted to look down from the chancel and see their faces when they looked up from the audience and saw Mel out in front on the tenor side and me out in front with the basses.

As I was getting to the edge of the crowd on my way up to the Hepburn crosswalk, one of last year's graduates stopped me. Although I remembered his face, I had forgotten his name but didn't want to say so.

"What happened? I just came from the Phi Beta Kappa meeting this morning. Your name was written in ink on the list at the bottom, but you weren't inducted. Pa White was Chairman. He passed over you."

"I don't know anything about it. I have no idea what it means."

I got started again toward Hepburn when Buddy Newman came along and got into his car. Before he could start the motor, he noticed me and came over:

"Lyle, you haven't paid your ten dollars for this year's Kaleidoscope. Do you think it's fair to welsh out and let your classmates pay the freight for you?"

I mumbled something about not having ten dollars, and I didn't have. I walked away from him, and he got back into his car slamming the door hard. There was a rule students were not allowed to have cars on campus, but he was so important he got a special ruling, I supposed.

I was still watching Bud swing out to drive away, when Pete White was waiting for me, too.

He said, "Lyle, before we break up I want you to know that you are the reason for my changing my major from Classics."

I was already late, and ignored him, not even trying to answer. I thought to myself that the bills for Kaleidoscope must have been settled a month ago, and that Bud as treasurer was only after my ten dollars to put in his pocket. I had no idea what happened at the Phi Bete meeting. I hadn't got my grades for this year, but unless Dr. Beers forgave all the papers I didn't pass in while studying for Comprehensives and gave me really high grades in Chaucer and Victorian, I was sure I was way short of what I needed for Phi Bete. I had never given it a serious thought up to now, and was going to forget it. I didn't see why Pete blamed me for not getting that prize two years ago. Why didn't he and Pa White blame Mr. Burrage?

It was the beginning of a wonderful Commencement, and I was lucky to be graduating and nothing was going to spoil it, not after I hung on four years by the skin of my teeth, never doubting I would.

-O-

It was great standing in the foyer to Mead Chapel knowing that in a minute Pop and Mom would be hearing the voices of the choir and seeing us process down the center aisle and climb the steps into the chancel and swing around, tenors and altos to the south side and basses and sopranos to the north to our seats where we would turn to face out over the congregation. I could hardly hold back my emotion as we marched in, but my voice was raised with the others until we fill the chapel to the rafters:

Now thank we all our God
With heart and hands and voices

As I turned into the bass section, first in line, I let my eyes swing over the great crowd, but there were too many for me to find Mom and Pop. I knew they were there somewhere and could see me even if I couldn't see them.

I was proud of Prexy's sermon, but wondered if they would understand how the son of D. L. Moody could be so unlike his father and not in the least evangelical. I knew they must love Elly Delft's solo that almost pulled my breath out of my body, as always happened when she sang. She would sing again tomorrow at Commencement.

-O-

We walked from Middle Painter down College to Weybridge Street for tea at the Beers's. I knew the folks were both tired out from the long drive and the strangeness and all the activities but I didn't want them to think for a minute they weren't the most important part of the weekend for me. Mom was wearing her new gray dress but Pop didn't buy a new suit, but had spruced up his worn blue serge, which looked purple in full light. He had decked himself out in a fancy striped shirt that was brand new, and a green tie. His shoes like my own were carefully polished to hide scuff marks. I was wearing my white flannel pants and a light blue jacket and white shirt and plaid tie and felt very dressed up and correct.

Dr. Beers was at the door and in his self-demeaning but friendly way treated Pop and Mom as if they were trustees of the College in that gravelly voice, not very loud but penetrating.

"Your son will be missed. Lyle has been in my classes all the way from freshman to senior, and you have a right to be proud of him."

Art Brundidge was coming in with an important-looking woman as tall as he in a wide-brimmed straw hat trimmed with real-looking pale pink roses, and we were passed on to Mrs. Beers who gave us small glass cups of tea with an ice cube in each glass and a half slice of lemon floating in it. We were supposed to pick up our own napkin and china dessert plate and help ourselves from several heaped platters of cookies. We backed into a corner being careful not to spill tea.

Amy Niles was there and I introduced the folks and she introduced us to her sister Olive, older than she.

Amy asked me "What are you going to do next year?"

And I said, "I haven't found a job yet."

Then I told the folks, "Amy taught first semester the class I told you about teaching in the high school."

Pop said to Amy, "I guess you had them well broke in before Lyle got to them."

Amy said, "I was scared to death of them."

I asked, "Do you know where you're going to study in London?"

"It's all arranged for me. The University of London."

I said to Olive, "After yesterday, you must be very proud of your sister. She walked away with all the honors."

Olive: "Oh, my yes."

Mom asked her what she was doing.

"As a matter of fact, I'm going to London with Amy. I am going to work on my doctoral thesis at the British Museum."

Art Brundidge and his mother joined us, and after introductions all around, Pop and Mom and I lingered a few minutes and then drifted back to the door and said goodbye to Mrs. Beers and then to Dr. Beers, who started introducing us to Rollin and his mother and Helen who were just coming in, and we were able to tell him we already knew each other, and make our getaway, Dr. Beers calling after us,

"Let me know what your plans are, Lyle."

I told him I would.

-O-

Monday morning was another busy time. We had Mel's trunk strapped on the back of the Model A and the car parked at the Racicot's, and we walked there after the procession from campus and the service at the Congregational Church, where we got our diplomas.

The folks said goodbye to the Racicots, and brought out their suitcases, and we drove to lower campus to park and join the Campbells for Commencement Dinner in McCullough Gym.

I had already finished my work at Hepburn. After stuffing ourselves with dinner and stopping by Beta Kappa for me to stow the clothes I'd been wearing and change into corduroys and a work shirt, by two-thirty we were on our way back to Northfield Farms.

The only thing happened on the way home was just east of Ludlow, where Mel was driving and he and Pop were in front, and I was three-quarters asleep in the back with Mom when she poked me. A Buick had just caught up and passed us, everybody waving, and it was the Elliotts with Sarah Lou in the back, waving for dear life through the rear window until they passed ahead out of sight.

Chapter Thirty-Nine

1933

Summer

No job for next year, but still that possibility of hearing from Sanborn Seminary, nothing else in sight. The Payne boys would come the middle of June, and I stuck to my resolution not to bellhop. I went to the Sergeant House and proposed to get meals there if I could have a reduced rate by waiting on table whenever they needed an extra waiter. Miss Sergeant and Serge agreed.

At the fraternity house, where I was staying temporarily, on the second evening, I had a phone call -- a man, a strange voice telling me I knew him from summers when I bellhopped.

"I'm Bill Bradley, a cashier at the Bank. You used to come in and to deposit your tips."

I couldn't recall ever seeing him.

"I have an apartment in the house where your fraternity used to be. Are you doing anything this evening?"

"You mean tonight?"

"Yes, I wonder do you have time to drop in for a glass of wine?" He paused, then added, "I really would like to see you."

My heart began to pound. I said, "What time do you have in mind?"

His voice seemed full and rich: "Are you doing anything now?"

"You mean right this minute?" The House was practically empty. I had no idea where the caretaker went. I was glad nobody was around to overhear, because I was feeling a sensation in my groin and a tingling in my cock as if somebody had stroked it. I looked around at the empty room.

"How did you track me down?"

"They told me at the Inn I might find you here. Are you free?"

"Yes,"

"Come over. I'll be expecting you."

It seemed strange to be going up the walk to what had been Beta Kappa House until we moved to our new quarters just on the angle where the road to the College turned west from South Main Street. He was opening the door and I did recognize him, tall heavysset, around thirty, thirty-five, dressed in his business suit. There was a bottle of red wine and an empty second glass beside it on the coffee table and a large book open to what looked to be color reproductions of paintings. He had a half-full glass in his hand.

He motioned me to the couch in back of the coffee table and I recognized the Adam/God view from the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel -- much better than the shallow black and white print Harry Owen used in his History of Art. Two pages opened into each other with (as you looked at it) the naked Adam on the left stretching out his finger across the indented centerfold to touch the finger of God reaching toward him from the other page. In a quick glance I took in the familiar image of the near leg stretched out and the raised knee of the relaxed, bent-up other leg and the little pecker flopped over to rest on the cushion of the near thigh, with a hint of scrotum bulging behind the small finger of uncircumcised cock.

After my quick glance, I moved my eyes away. Bill seated himself beside me, reaching over to pour me a glass of wine, then extending his own glass to touch the brim of mine.

"Here's to you."

I was thinking how Harry Owen pointed out the contrast between the undraped Adam and the billowy drapery covering the figure of the older man representing the mystery and power of Almighty God. Harry never said what I was always thinking, that if we could see God's cock, he would become human, too, and the graceful meeting of the two index fingers would be an invitation from

the older man to the young one who had just woke from deep sleep to be roused by somebody more experienced than he.

I always wondered about the impish faces surrounding God. One seemed the face of a woman, though it could be a boy. They were bare but mostly out of sight behind the body of God. They were like wise Cupids. You couldn't see the sexual organs of any of them. Only Adam's were disclosed and his were as if waiting to be aroused for the first time.

A half hour later when we had finished the bottle and rather woozily explored the album, Bill now and then reaching across me caressingly as he turned a page, I was wearing a full erection, and he knew it. He led me in to his bedroom with its double bed and started undressing me. I had to go to the john to relieve the pressure in my bladder, and when I come back Bill was lying there and pulled me over onto him.

"Are you clean?"

I thought he was asking whether I was free from having a social disease, and said, "Yes."

He pushed my face down to his cock, and twisted me around and pushed his face into mine, but quickly pulled back, and I realized he must have meant did I wash under my foreskin when I went to the bathroom, and I hadn't. He soon twisted himself away and held my face into his erect cock, and I started touching my lips and tongue to it as I had never before done for anybody. He stretched me out, turned me end for end, with my legs hanging over the foot of the bed and laid his whole weight on my face and started moving his cock up and down in my mouth and began smothering me till I gagged. By the time he came off I had lost my breath completely and could barely push out from under him. I had to swallow his come.

He didn't do anything for me but got up quick and went to the bathroom and when he came back ignored that I was lying there unsatisfied. He pulled his clothes on, buttoned his fly and started to the other room. I dressed and followed. We hardly got there when we heard the outside door open into the front hall. We scuttled to the couch and were sitting there looking at the album when a well-built young man come in and Bill introduced me to his roommate. We talked for a minute, none of us with his mind on what we were saying. Then

the young fellow, whose name I didn't even catch, excused himself and went into the back of the apartment.

Bill invited me to the dogcart next door, and I had to eat a hamburger, my face, I think, fiery red as if everybody at the counter and behind it knew I was being paid for sucking Bill's cock.

-O-

A couple evenings later when I came back from dinner, I found a note on my bed to call back from a phone call. I expected it to be Bill Bradley but it was a woman, an old lady voice saying, "Is this Lyle Glazier?"

"Yes."

"This is Mrs. H. B. Hagar. I'm seventy-five years old. I've lived in Middlebury all my life. I live at 84 Washington Street. There are two white houses that look alike on the right side about half way out from the Inn annex, and mine is the first one. My son is a graduate of the College and works in Washington for the Government. He thinks I'm too old to be living here alone. I called Dean Hazeltine to find out if he knows of some able-bodied young man who is looking for a room for the summer and might live here free in return for keeping me company. He gave me your name and number. Would you be interested in a room, rent free, in return for keeping company with an old woman? I will furnish a comfortable room and will take care of washing the bedding and your laundry if the two of us think we can stand each other."

I told her I did need a room beginning the first of July.

"Would you be willing to move in earlier?"

"I guess so."

"Suppose you come over to see me. Would you be free around eleven tomorrow morning? There's a sign out front, 'Bed and Breakfast.'"

When I went there, she was watching from a front window, and met me at the door, a rather bandy-legged, not very tall old lady with black eyebrows and very white hair.

"My hair used to be black as my eyebrows, but at forty it turned absolutely pure white the way it is now."

I followed her into the front room. She walked stiff-jointed but kept herself straightup as if she had made up her mind not to be crippled.

"Everybody in Middlebury knows me. They call me 'Ma Hagar.'"

I'm not sure I want to call a strange woman 'Ma.'

There was a little black and white terrier bitch came in from the kitchen and rubbed around Mrs. Hagar and then came over and sniffed me and rubbed up against my ankles. I reached down and scratched behind her ears, and she reared up on her hind legs. She wore a black collar with a license and name tag.

"Do you mind dogs?"

"I love dogs."

"She likes you. She loves to go for walks. There's a path across the road leads up onto Chipman Hill, but I don't take her there any more. I'm too stiff jointed. Her name is Crackers."

We went upstairs to look at a bedroom looking like the best spare room, a big room with double bed and bureau against the east, inside wall and a tall chiffonier on the south wall beside the south window looking down on the back yard. Under the west window there was a maple table with plenty of room for a typewriter and a good reading lamp. There were a couple of straight chairs and a deep-upholstered lounge chair. I was attracted to the room, but not sure I was ready to call her "Ma."

She stood in the doorway watching me look down on the backyard.

"What do you think?"

"It's a very comfortable room."

"Good springs and mattress. Try it."

It was probably the most comfortable bed I ever sat on.

"You don't have to worry about taking care of me. I won't keep tabs on your going out and coming in. This can be your room just as if living at home. It's the room Dr. Douglas Beers had the first year he was in Middlebury -- before he got married. I used to hear him up here evenings talking away to himself, and he told me he was practising reading Chaucer. He used to keep it up till way on after I went to bed."

"It's a wonderful room."

The little terrier had come in and was rubbing around my legs. I reached down and scratched her around the ears, and she arched her body against me.

"If you like dogs, she's a good 'Crackers.' I put her on a leash when I walk her along the street, but if you wanted to take her up onto Chipman Hill, you

could take the leash off. She loves running loose up there, but I stopped going. Too much for these old legs."

"It's a wonderful room, Mrs. Hagar." I wondered if there was some hidden joker she hadn't told me. It didn't stand to reason she could be giving all this away free for nothing.

"I can do your laundry every Monday when I do the rest of my washing. You can just lay it out on the bed, or you can bring it downstairs in a bundle whichever is easier."

"Can I move in right away, Mrs. Hagar?"

"Tomorrow morning if you like."

And that was the way we left it.

-O-

David and Tommy and Miss Eleanor had come back. The first afternoon I went there, she wanted me to come talk to her mother. The old lady was sitting in the drawingroom working on a piece of tatting as if she had been there ever since I last saw her two years ago. Thrown over the back of a straight chair was a suit of clothes made of some heavy black material.

Miss Eleanor said, "My father was a professor at the college. We are giving away some of his things, and we wonder if you would like to try on this tailcoat."

She lifted it, the old lady having her eyes on me as if I might make off with her husband's best suit.

Miss Eleanor helped me into a swallow-tailed evening jacket, then turned to her mother.

"He's the exact size. It fits him to perfection."

The old lady muttered, "When in the world would he have an occasion to wear it?"

There was no question it was a very fine coat, of heavy, expensive broadcloth, and hardly a bit worn. The pants were still laid over the chairback.

"He is exactly Poppa's height."

The old lady said, "Humph!"

Miss Eleanor helped me out of the jacket, and folded it and draped it back over the trousers.

I went out where David and Tommy were waiting beside the Packard, and we drove to campus for an afternoon of tennis. Tommy took his turn playing against each of us, and David and I played a match.

-O-

One night when I went to the Sergeant House, at another table eating by himself was a young man, who nodded and I nodded back. The next night when I went in, Serge said the young fellow asked him if he thought I would like to take a ride with him. He was a teacher from R.P.I. who came there off and on for a weekend.

I waited around after dinner and we went out in his Chevy roadster. A very nice man, he was a teacher of Drawing and Surveying.

"When I get fed up with the routine, I come over to Middlebury."

We drove out every night for a week down to Lake Dunmore where he parked in a grove near the beach. He wanted to know all about me, my plans for the future, my opinions about people I mentioned. The last night we went out together, after we had parked for two hours, he remarked, "I notice you have high ethical values. Whenever you talk about someone, you evaluate his moral standards."

Because he was praising me, I could feel blushes rising in my cheeks. Never having noticed this tendency in myself, I was glad to be commended our last night together. The next day in the morning he drove back to his classes at R.P.I.

-O-

Almost the end of June I had a phone call from Mary N. Bowles, who said she was dietitian in charge of meals for French Summer School.

"They depend on students to wait on table and are short one. I remember you speak French and wonder if you are interested in getting three meals a day in exchange for waiting at Hillcrest --breakfast from 7:00 to 8:30. lunch at noon, dinner at 6:30. Waiters have to be there three-quarters of an hour early to set up tables and have their own meals."

"Yes, I'm interested but just this morning I have an invitation to go down for an interview in Hampton Beach, New Hampshire for a job teaching English. I expect to be back Saturday,"

"Will you be free beginning Sunday evening?"

"I will be."

-O-

I hitched to Rutland, then across to White River Junction, and across New Hampshire to Sanborn Seminary for my interview. I had written ahead to Aunt Maud so stayed overnight Friday with her and Uncle Howard. He drove me over to the Seminary for the interview, and when we got there insisted on coming in to talk to the Headmaster, something I didn't at all want because he had been Headmaster there ten years ago, and had to leave in a hurry for some sort of fracas. I remembered one Thanksgiving they were riding high, and Aunt Maud was boasting, "Hootch-te-toot, hootch-te-toot, we're the head of the Institute!" and a month later by Christmas they had been kicked out.

But Uncle Howard was his usual self, wanting to do everything for anybody and showing his importance, so he had to come in to tell the Headmaster he had brought his smart nephew who'd done wonders at Middlebury, "...and the Seminary will be darned lucky to have him."

The headmaster was very polite to Uncle Howard, who stayed around a few minutes while I was waiting in the background, wondering how on earth I could redeem myself. When Uncle Howard finally went out to the car to wait for me and we got down to the interview, it turned out the Seminary didn't need an English teacher but a teacher of French and Spanish. Since I didn't know any Spanish I was not eligible.

Later in the summer after I got acquainted with other waiters and waitresses, all of them language students, I told Archie Biron about the job down at Sanborn, and he went for an interview and got it.

-O-

French summer school became my whole life. I was good at waiting on table. Many of the student waiters were learning French for the first time or were teachers from small schools where they had been teaching English and French, so French was their second string that they didn't know very well. They had little fluency of the kind Professor Ranty gave students in my classes with him for two years, and they would never have been able to keep up with Freeman's lectures on French literature.

Our headwaiter was fluent and told us "The secret is to study the menu for each meal and if you can get words like 'haricot vert' and 'petit pois' on the tip of

your tongue and know the difference between 'pomme' and 'pomme de terre' and at dinner find out the entree ahead of time and are prepared for questions about 'boeuf' and 'poisson' and 'poulet,' you'll find yourself far ahead of most students at your table, who will be feeling their way through the language."

I soon discovered I had nothing to fear, rattling off the menu each meal with the kind of joy of the language that I learned from M. Ranty. The native French teacher presiding at my table seemed to think I was wonderful, and the students regarded me with awe when they learned I had just graduated with a major in English and hadn't majored in French. Most assumed I was a summer school student and had no way of knowing I had been brought in by the dietitian to help out.

Lunch and dinner every day began with ritual, when Mons. Thibideaux, presiding professor, called for a salad bowl and lettuce and a bowl of cut-up carrots and white onions and peppers and olives and made a great point of pushing away the prepared bottle dressing and calling for vinegar and olive oil and, rolling up his sleeves, got into the salad bowl with both fists and both arms up to his elbows and mixed the salad, calling for the bread and butter plates from each place and enlisting my help to make a real event out of serving each guest with a flourish.

Evenings after dinner I was invited to their musicals and plays and parties. I could sing "Savez-vous planter les choux" with the best of them.

-O-

One Sunday afternoon I was talking to Mrs. Hagar in her kitchen when the doorbell rang. It was Bill Bradley looking for me. I had been too excited by French summer school to need more than the minimum sex I could provide myself, but was aroused in a minute. I went with him out towards East Middlebury and stopped on a back road and we went into the trees, where he had me lie down and he lay on top and had me blow him. It was strange how willing I was to do this for him as if it was his right, and he did nothing for me in return. In a way I enjoyed doing it, but I was resentful, too.

When he let me out back at Mrs. Hagar's and I went in, I was surprised to see that Bill's roommate I met at his apartment was there talking to Mrs. Hagar, and it seemed he roomed at her house before he went over to live with Bill. His name was Braverman, and seemed to be an awfully nice young fellow and quite

a coincidence that he should show up just while I was gone riding with Bill. After he left, Mrs. Hagar let me know she didn't like Bill, but I wasn't about to let her boss me around. I wasn't yet calling her "Ma," and hadn't made up my mind whether I ever would.

-O-

One night after I got home from waiting on table there was a knock on the door and it was John Israel Smith from my Chaucer class, the best poet who ever wrote for the SAXONIAN while I was in college. He wrote a poem "Boy pondering stars" about a boy walking at night on Chipman Hill. Charlotte Moody called it the best poem she ever read in a college magazine, and I agreed with her. John Israel had a way of putting in just the right word that nobody else would have thought about. Whoever else would have thought of that word "pondering"?

He was also one of the best students in Beers's Chaucer class.

He was "house-sitting" he told Ma and me in the big old gothic Victorian frame house with turrets and bay windows at the east end of Washington, filling the space at the end of the street, where it dead ended, so that as you came along the street from the Inn this weird house loomed up ahead like a rooming house for ghosts and goblins. Tonight was John Israel's first night as a house sitter, the owner, Miss Theodora Crane, a tall, gaunt librarian, having gone for the summer, and left John Israel in charge. He said he was terrified of staying there alone. He sat with Ma and me until past 10:30 talking in his drawly, affected voice. He had a headful of stories, and was very entertaining.

When he finally got around to leave, I kept him company. He said, "The reason I came over is that I'm afraid to stay in that house alone and wonder if you would ask Mrs. Hagar if I could spend the night with you?"

He was so obviously homosexual. I told him I didn't think Ma Hagar would like to have me have company.

We went along and stood in front of the great old house that loomed up against the night sky with its seventy-five windows reflecting moonlight.

"Doesn't it give you shivers?"

"I don't believe in ghosts. I'll go in with you to turn on the lights."

I didn't see any reason for his foolishness, and after seeing him settled, said goodnight and left him alone.

The next day I told Ma. Hagar, "John Israel was really scared to death of staying alone in Miss Crane's house. He asked if he could stay overnight with me, but I told him I didn't think you would want it."

"Heavens to Betsy! He's harmless enough. He wouldn't hurt a flea. You can have him here to stay overnight if you want to."

I never asked him. He continued to house/sit Miss Crane's haunted mansion.

-O-

Mom wrote: "I want you to come home. I want all my boys home this winter. Now you haven't found a job for next year, come home."

I heard they were going to hire a new librarian for the college library, and went in to talk to the head librarian, who said, "Your check-out list is a good reference, but we need somebody trained in library science, and we wouldn't be able to spare anybody to train you."

Dr. Adams hadn't sent me notice of any more openings, and I didn't want to give up and just go home. I heard that in 1934 they might hire a new English teacher for Northfield High School, and asked Dr. Adams to send them my application early.

-O-

One evening after we had finished waiting on table, I was sitting on the stoop of Hillcrest with some of my new friends, when a young married couple, near strangers, come and joined us. They listened to our banter apparently with delight. At a moment when the fun subsided while we caught our breath, and the others were breaking away, the young man turned to me and said, "Lyle, le pere de ma femme est Docteur Aydelotte, Professeur a Yale Universite. Il est President de la Rhodes Scholar Commission. Il cherche maintenant quelque candidat et je crois que vous est exactement le person."

His wife said nothing but regarded me with benevolence. I didn't know how to tell them that I'd been crazy to go to Oxford since when I was a senior in Northfield High School and Principal Lawley announced that a graduate of four years before, before I got to high school, had been chosen Rhodes Scholar from the University of Nebraska, where he went after graduating at Northfield.

Last year, knowing I didn't have a chance, I applied anyway, my application an act of sheer fantasy. I had got a C in that course in Histoire de la

Litterature Francaise with Dr. Freeman. I remember making a point of telling the evaluating committee in Burlington that I skipped a prerequisite in order to take the literature course because I wanted to read French literature and didn't want another required course in French grammar. I was totally ineffectual at that evaluation hearing. The committee were very kind but I could see they were not impressed. In answer to a question from one of them, in a moment of fatuous candor, I confessed I had an inferiority complex, immediately correcting myself to explain that I meant a feeling of inferiority. Nobody pursued the distinction. They were really not interested in me. It seemed I had little to recommend me to these would-be benefactors.

When this practically unknown couple asked me again if I would be interested, all I could think was my guilty secret that the record showed I applied and was rejected. I sat there dumb, wondering how on earth somebody could simply appoint a Rhodes Scholar. I knew the name Aydelotte because I had feverishly studied the application brochure, fantasizing possible conversations with that distinguished functionary. Except for that delusion, I had nothing to recommend me. Doc Cook and none of my teachers supported or discouraged my application.

Now, not knowing what to say, I sat there like a bump on a log and don't say anything except. "Ah, Monsieur, que je veux, que je veux." After a long, empty interval, they shook hands, and I never heard from them or saw them again

-O-

After summer school was over, I met Bill Bradley on the street, and he told me he was going to have an overnight party at his cottage down at Lake Dunmore. One of his best friends, a member of K.D.R. fraternity, was in town with his girlfriend, and Bill had invited them for a spaghetti and meatball supper. On the spur of the moment he invited me, and I went.

I hardly knew Rick Henderson, but it turned out Bill had taken him for weekends to Lake Winnebepesaukee and Revere Beach, and they seemed to know each other well. Rick's girl Terry was a good sport and rather wild, I guessed. There was lots of wine with the meal. After dinner and dishes, with a lot of rough housing, in which I hardly joined because it was the first time I was where there was anything like public sex, and I was too shy to get in on it.

Finally, around eleven o'clock we went upstairs. There were three rough, unfinished bedrooms with a double bed in each. I was sleeping by myself, Bill in the middle room, and Rick and Terry at the room the other end of the attic from mine. I could hear a lot of yelling back and forth, and then I gathered that Bill had gone to their bedroom. From the shrieking they were all in bed together. I pulled a comforter around my ears and tried to get off to sleep. I came out of my doze to find Rick standing in his shorts beside my bed.

"Come on in with us, Lyle. We're having a ball."

I pulled the covers around my ears, and then got up and followed him. When I got there, they were all three pulling and hawling in the same bed, and the only way I could have got in would have been to crawl on top and wiggle my way in between Terry in the middle and one of the two men. It was too much for me.

Back in my room I fell asleep instantly and slept soundly, tired from my busy summer. In the morning their voices from the kitchen, called to me to come down. I had slept all that time till ten-thirty.. Rick came up wearing dress shorts and a teeshirt to tell me I was missing pancakes and maple syrup. I waited for him to leave then pulled out and got into my clothes and went down, joining the raucous party, and downing my share of pancakes. When we got back to Middlebury, I had Bill drop me off at the Sergeant House where I was back taking meals and waiting on table once in a while when they needed me.

I had heard of only two students in our class who had jobs teaching -- two girls: Amy Niles's friend Al Heald and a girl whose father owned a private school and hired his daughter. I was just about ready to give up on finding a job and thought of writing Mom I would come home for the winter. The depression had closed in, and I hated to go home and not be able to find any work, not even in the tool factory, where they were laying off help. There was no place there for Melvin, who was running a bread delivery route for the summer.

-O-

Tommy and David had a visitor they'd mentioned before -- "a real rich boy, who doesn't go to school but has a tutor."

For some reason his mother had fired his tutor, and there had been talk about him and his mother and uncle coming for a visit, but as late as yesterday there was nothing specific, and here suddenly they had come.

When I went there in the afternoon, they had planned a picnic on Mount Moosalamoo with Miss Eleanor and the boy's mother and uncle going in one car, and the boy going with us in the Packard. When I went out to meet Tommy and David's guest, the uncle had already backed out the roadster and gone back into the house. The boy was sitting in the front seat fussing with the key in the ignition, paying no attention when David introduced me. He was trying to start the car but having no luck.

David and Tommy were so polite, standing there looking at the boy as if he was some prize package from outer space. I watched him for a minute trying to reach the gas pedal with his leg that was not quite long enough while at the same time he kept turning the key, grinding the starter fruitlessly. I was wondering if he had ever driven a car, the first time at the Payne's I had a problem to contend with.

When I put my hand on the door latch on the driver's side, he locked the latch from the inside, slipped the keys down into the pocket of his shorts, and said, "If you want them, you will have to come get them."

I had no desire to reach into his pocket. He had the body of a child of twelve or thirteen with an expression that could shift from the innocence of childhood to the shrewd craftiness of a boy of sixteen. I could see how he could manipulate a new tutor, to get the goods on him and hold in reserve a means to get him sacked whenever he pleased, which would probably be the exact moment the poor fellow realized he was hopelessly enmeshed and was frantically trying to extricate himself, an effort bound to fail.

He was looking at me mischievously: "My tutor and I always play pickpocket. Why don't you try it?"

As if by accident he rubbed his hand on his fly, then, with a yawn and a stretch, put both hands one on top of the other and pulled back against his groin. I pretended not to notice, but surprised him by reaching past him and opening the door from the inside, crowding him away from it as I pushed over under the wheel to occupy the driver's seat.

"Nobody is going anywhere with this car until you give me the keys."

He looked at me sullenly and reached into his pocket and tossed the keys onto the seat beside me.

"Now you go around and get in the rumble, and Tommy can ride with you. I'm doing the driving, and David can sit in front."

By the time we were settled, Miss Eleanor and the mother and uncle came out all smiles with two picnic baskets. Miss Eleanor introduced me to Mrs. Hitchcock and her brother Joel Ingraham.

"I see you have already met Basil."

The boy was sitting there in back with Tommy, the picture of good behavior.

The mother greeted me indifferently, but the uncle seemed to be studying me as if I were a rare specimen. They packed the two baskets into the boot of their Buick touring car, and we were on the way, they following me as I led them to the foot of the mountain, David and Tom and I knowing the route well, having several times climbed to the top of Moosalamoo and along the summit to the sheer cliff on the south wall looking down over Lake Dunmore.

We parked both cars in the shade of the picnic area where the footpath led up the mountain, I carrying one picnic basket, Uncle Joel the other. Basil studiously avoided me and joined Tommy and David. The two ladies came behind, the entire party going slowly because of them. When at last we reached the summit and the ladies caught their breath, we traveled along the footpath to the southern promontory looking down a sheer pitch to the lake shimmering in a landscape stretching south and west to a flat plate of glass in the distance that would be Champlain, with the southern peaks of the Adirondacks in New York State. We spread a robe and had lunch.

Apparently, it was assumed I had Basil as well as Tommy and David in charge. To my surprise, he showed no inclination to venture onto the thinly forested rocky brink.

While the ladies drowsed in the shade, I organized a game of hide and seek -- the first time, caring for the boys, there were enough to play the game. I warned them against hiding within a rod of the face of the cliff. Uncle Joel joined the game. In order to guard against accidents, he and I managed to monopolize the goal, a towering oak from whose base we could make sure the boys don't take any chances.

When it was time to call a halt, it was decided that the boys and I would go ahead and drive to the beach for a dip, while Uncle Joel would superintend the ladies' safe retreat.

Tommy and David as usual rented a cubicle together, and Basil and I another. As we changed in the narrow space, he played the coquette with sly glances, showing a more than furtive curiosity, which I foiled by turning my back and peeling off my clothes and rushing into my bathing trunks, leaving him by himself.

There was a lifeguard as always, and after making sure Basil could swim as expertly as David and Tommy, I indulged my single skill of diving under in the shallows and heading out into the lake. using my body like a fish, legs together flexing like a propelling tail, and executing vigorous sideways flipper-like snaps of my arms, hands cupped to exert a maximum friction against the water. My one aquarian accomplishment, I enjoyed it fully, imagining myself an emigree back to the natural element from which our race emerged aeons ago.

As I flipped and flapped underwater, I was thinking of Basil's sly courtship and telling myself I had nothing to lose. If his mother and uncle and Miss Eleanor harbored the slightest inkling of trying me out to see whether Basil would like me enough to take me as a tutor, I would have none of it.

"God damn it, if he courts me again when we get back in the dressing room, I won't resist."

In the cold springs rising from lake bottom, my pecker grew hard as a nail and I anticipated when we got back in the dressing room giving Basil an eyeful that would make him drool. Tommy and David, as always, took their time, I as usual standing around on one foot and then the other, waiting for them, but this time if they lingered in the dressing room, they could wait for me. I wouldn't touch with a ten foot pole an offer of a job tutoring Basil, but if he was after cock, he could have it. And that would be the end of it.

If his mother and Uncle Joel stuck around tomorrow and told me how much they have fallen for me, and how Basil thought I was perfect, I would tell them nothing doing. Going home to Northfield Farms to do odd jobs would be better than prostituting myself to a spoiled brat who would have planned it all out the way he doubtless had before, so he could spring his trap whenever he took a fancy.

When I came out of the water, it was four fifteen by the clock in the refreshment booth, I waiting with considerable impatience for the boys to make up their minds to stop splashing each other. I was standing there when Carl Seymour appeared out of nowhere, begging for a ride to the Inn, supposed to go on duty at five, and the lift he had down had deserted him.

"Lyle, you've got to get me back to the Inn in time."

As if it was suddenly the most important thing in my life, I hurried to the water's edge and urged the boys out. David didn't see why it was our duty to furnish a taxi for a bellhop. I insisted. The boys still held back but finally tagged along to the dressing rooms, complaining. David and Tommy went in to theirs, and I herded Basil in with me, changing in an instant and hustling him into his clothes.

We had to wait for David and Tommy. When I pounded on their door, David wouldn't listen, not an outright rebellion but I could hear him muttering. Basil was entirely subdued. Carl was in the front seat of the Packard. I boosted Basil into the rumble and finally Tommy and David came. It was twenty minutes to five.

I didn't say anything but bundled them in with Basil.

I had never driven the Packard faster than thirty-five, but today I spun the wheels on the sandy beach, and on the lake road was hitting forty. It was as if it had become a life and death matter to get Carl on duty on time. Out on the highway I hit fifty, then fifty-five, passing cars already going a good speed. South of town, when we came to a stop light turning to caution, I sailed through, and Carl sprinted up the front steps of the Inn a quarter hour late.

I could hardly let up on the pedal. When the boys piled out at the garage on the lower level south of the house, I flung the keys to David and was off like a shot toward Ma Hagar's.

Chapter Forty

Fall 1933

Grad. Stu. Midd.

Ma Hagar told me some woman on the phone wanted to talk to me, It was a Miss Steele from the Community House, which I never heard of before. From her description I knew the house, a yellow brick mansion at the corner of Station Street kitty corner to the Congregational Church. I had often admired it.

"I'm sure you have never heard of Caroline Steele. I've returned from years as Assistant Dean of the American College for Girls in Istanbul. Jessica Swift has given her old home to the ladies of Middlebury, and I'm the new Director. We need a custodian and Eleanor Means has recommended you. We can pay you a stipend and provide you with a room. Your duties would be general caretaker in charge of sweeping, dusting, waxing floors, that sort of thing, but perhaps most of all you would be a live-in resident. I myself and my uncle and niece have moved into Mrs. Swift's lovely old stone house on Washington Street, and I will be here in my second floor office Mondays through Fridays, but we need somebody to be living here to give the house a lived-in look, someone we can depend on, and someone not afraid to do manual labor, but a respectable person, too. I understand you are a recent graduate of the college and may be available."

She had been running on so I hardly knew what to think. It looked as though I would be a high class janitor. I didn't want to push the subject of pay at the very beginning, but I wondered if my chief pay would be the title of custodian, a highfalutin word for janitor if I ever heard one.

So far I hadn't got a word in edgewise, but now she asked, "Are you interested in coming for an interview? I can see you this afternoon after two, if that is suitable, or some other time today or tomorrow. I am anxious to fill this position because I have a thousand things to settle. We have just arrived yesterday after having had a terrible experience in Philadelphia visiting a friend in

a very good neighborhood. We parked on the street, and overnight some vandal cut through the roof and absconded with our valuables including two polished-wood locked carrying cases of family silver which had been in my mother's family for years. The police were very considerate, but so far haven't a clue. It's a great shock to have this happen on our first day in America after all these years."

When she stopped to catch her breath, I put in that I was interested and would come see her at two.

As I approached the house just before two o'clock, I regarded it with new interest -- really a historical monument, a solid rectangle of weathered yellow brick, with full basement, two stories and attic on a small rise fronting on Main Street. It looked as if it had dominated that spot for ever, standing well above the street with, leading to the front door, a rather steep walk interrupted by stone steps rising between interlaced railings of handsomely wrought steel. There was a fanlight over the front door, and on the ground floor two ample windows on each side facing the street, and above on the second floor the same classically balanced architecture, set off by a more elaborate center window. It would be the most elegant house I ever lived in.

The door was locked. After a short interval, I could see through window slits on the side somebody hurrying down stairs, a little woman, demurely dressed, fingering her eyeglasses hanging on a black ribbon below the ruffled collar of her blouse. Flinging open the door, she quickly lifted the glasses and studied me for an instant, then let them drop. She led the way up the curving staircase to her office at the top. A tallish thin man rose from an overstuffed chair, and she introduced me to "Uncle." After extending a limp hand, he sank back and continued reading his paper.

Miss Steele pointed me to a straight chair and seating herself behind her antique desk leaned forward, elbows on the polished wood.

"Have you been here before?"

I admitted I hadn't.

"It's a lovely house. When Mrs. Swift was born and grew up here, it was the Stewart mansion. Her father was a legislator and a judge, you know, and finally Governor Stewart. I feel it is a great privilege to be here as the first Director of the Community House. Now that you have seen it inside, do you think you would like to live here? Uncle and I will show you your room in a moment.

We can pay you a salary of \$50 a month, for which you will be expected to be the custodian. General maintenance and care of the furnace will be your province. Mine will be supervision over you, as well as Director in charge of advising and coordinating various programs designed by the ladies of the community for which you will share no responsibility. Your duties will be purely custodial, not in the least supervisory." She made this point emphatically as if it was important for me to know that I was not in any way to intrude on her "province," for which I was grateful.

She interrupted Uncle's reading and engaged his cooperation to go with us to inspect my living quarters at the back of the house. I expected an alcove or broom closet and was amazed to have the door opened on a four poster double bed, a fireplace with logs on the grate, upholstered clawfoot chairs, two sturdy antique bureaus, a commodious writing desk with a windsor chair drawn up to it, and a capacious walk-in closet. I had never seen such a bedroom. A tourist would pay a fortune to stay overnight in such a room.

After this inspection, Miss Steele closed the door as gently as if on a museum exhibit.

She let Uncle lead the way down narrow, winding back stairs for a tour through ground floor conference rooms and at the right of the front door a drawing room furnished with heirlooms, including an upright antique player piano with -- as Miss Steele proudly revealed -- "dozens of rolls of classical music (Chopin, Beethoven, Ravel, Bach's Preludes and Inventions, Mozart and MacDowell)" -- performed by eminent musicians whose names, most of them, I had never before heard. But I anticipated evening hours learning to operate the machinery of that extraordinary instrument.

Downstairs, the great basement was unfinished and unfurnished except for a modern furnace which, Miss Steele instructed me, "...will virtually take care of itself in cold weather when you learn to deal with dampers and that trigger in the pipe that will supply a torrent of coal from the coalbin, whose outside high window opens conveniently on Station Street."

First floor conference rooms had been cleared of antiques and remodeled with walls repainted in yellow and apple green and peach. Folding chairs were stacked in corners. Floors were practical linoleum except for the deep oriental

rug in the drawing room. I was persuaded it would be an honor to preside as custodian over the maintenance of this house.

Back in Miss Steele's second floor office, which, as I now realized, was another showplace, Uncle buried himself again in his newspaper, while she positioned her eyeglasses firmly on the bridge of her nose, and reinspected me for a final and, apparently, affirmative review.

-O-

Harry Owen introduced me to his section of freshman composition and literature as his assistant:

"Lyle Glazier, a last year graduate, will read your papers and grade them. After hearing his comprehensive examination, I can assure you we are lucky to have him. If you wish to discuss your written work, he is always available. Let him know and he will set up an appointment."

I was thinking how well he had cushioned the blow of informing them he would not be grading their papers and hoped not to have too many complaints,

I had been crazy to get on the inside of one of Harry's freshman sections ever since I was a freshman and heard he made his students write on subjects like "What is Art?" or "A probable impossibility is better than an improbable possibility." Now I would have a chance to see what a class of freshmen could make out of such nutcrackers.

I was surprised to find they looked so young. I hadn't realized I looked like that four years ago. By comparison I felt old and mature .

After class Harry instructed me that I must write a comment and be able to make a clear justification of every grade. I found it a creative challenge and, when the first set of papers came in, worked hard at it. It wasn't enough simply to say, "Well done," or "How much time did you spend on this?" I was supposed to dig into the argument and the texture and comment on both content and form. After I turned a batch of compositions back to Harry, he could go over them and add to my comment with something written in his own hand.

I had also to make out quizzes and later on would take over midyear and final exams, proctor them, and correct them. With a genius like Harry as teacher, it was a great responsibility.

I began to feel I was beginning to know Harry and have his respect. We became friends. One day I ran into him near the library as he was hurrying to his

Browning class that I didn't correct for, and he was coming from lunch and had, apparently, freshly brushed his teeth. There was a gob of white toothpaste stuck to a corner of one lip. As we talked, I wondered if I should call his attention to it or just let him go on his way, thinking he was what he himself might have called ironically "the glass of fashion, and the mould of form."

Finally, I did say, "Harry, if you will just take your handkerchief and wipe the corner of your mouth, there's some toothpaste..."

"Lyle, almost nobody ever mentions such a thing but lets the poor ass go on his way thinking he's the cat's pajamas. I can't tell you how much I owe you. 'Vanity, saith the preacher, vanity' and, like everybody, I am vain."

When I proctored the first quiz, there was a little golden-haired girl in the second row well back, whom I studied while she was writing, and she looked up in deep thought as if she was too withdrawn to see me, then came out of her haze, focused on me, smiled radiantly as if she had captured an idea, and slid back to concentrate on the quick glide of pen over paper. I was thinking I would try to see if she would go with me to Saturday night dance at McCullough Gym some time.

When I read her paper, I found her as bright as her dazzling look. Her paper was sharp, with a touch of ridicule that threw what she said into comic perspective. With money from Harry and my salary at the Community House, for the first time I could afford to take a girl to the dance, and sometime along, I was going to ask her.

-O-

I was taking two graduate courses, Doc Cook's in the short story of the '20s and '30s and Dick Brown's course in Milton and his Age. It was the way I liked to learn history by reading about the Puritan rebellion and the Interregnum and Cornwall and Milton as Latin Secretary -- which was really the same as what we called Foreign Secretary today. If you could put history in with the writing of a poet like Milton, the historical facts began to be more than abstract lists of dates and events.

There were three students, two besides myself. Charlie DuBois was actually a senior and hadn't graduated. but he was older than most undergraduates, having gone to Bay Path in Springfield, Mass., and now worked his way through Middlebury typing papers for students, or when the news got

around how professional his work was, he was hired by one of the campus offices for as many hours as he could spare. For the first time I learned to know and admire him. He told me he had learned how to write papers right out from scratch with hardly any revision, the trick being to think through your subject and try to organize it in your mind, and then let rip, and it would probably come out better than most papers written by students who spent hours backing and filling and never hitting the nail on the head.

The third student was Jane Spellman, Research Librarian at Starr library, probably in her mid thirties. She was pretty closemouthed but obviously very bright and thinking of going somewhere like Simmons College to get a doctorate in Library Science, an ambition that seemed way beyond my reach. She was a very nice person, quietly dressed, with a voice that was confident without being aggressive, never very loud.

As soon as we got organized, we were going to have to write short papers one or the other of us would read to the others every week.

-O-

Now I wasn't going right out straight taking five courses and working full time on the side, I found I was more often aware of my cock coming up hard and demanding attention. I could go along for a while taking care of myself, but then sometimes, an urge came over me to want to touch somebody else and be touched. I didn't want to go to Bill Bradley because he wanted something for himself without giving anything back.

One morning I looked down on the street from the Community House kitchen window, standing with a piece of toast in my hand, and I drew back out of sight of Calvi's boy hurrying along on his way to work at the ice cream parlor. All day I couldn't get him out of my mind and when I went to bed I was fantasizing, trying to cook up a scheme to get him into the house.

The next morning I was in pants and shirt without any underwear, standing on a chair at that same window, with, across the street, the windows of a house where I never had seen anybody moving around. Nobody in sight was looking over at me, and if so, what of it? I had a scrub rag in my hand, and was busy polishing the glass of the window.

When the boy came along, I was busy as hell there in the morning light, and when he caught me moving up there, he jumped back startled and looked

hard, and I met his eyes. As if by accident I dropped my hand with the rag in it down at the level of my fly and rub around on the glass. Then I motioned toward the back door.

He hesitated as if he wasn't about to take the risk, then turned back out of sight on the sidewalk to the porch. I was down out of the chair like a flash and at the door. I let him in and pulled him along with me to the cellar stairs and down into the cavernous basement in front of the furnace. I could hardly wait to get my hand on him. Kneeling in front of him I took out his cock, and saw that he had a good one. I straightened up and let him take out mine. We were both very excited. It was the first time I had really taken a full grown cock in my hand and discovered what a wonderful instrument the hand was for fitting around a strange cock and bringing it up hard while somebody was working on mine. In a minute our hands were flying, squeezing the other faster and faster. I was looking at his cock in my flying hand and feeling his hand moving on mine. In no time at all I was coming, and could feel him rising under my fingers, both of us fever pitch, and then we were squeezing and spurting as if his cock was mine and mine his. I was careful to point him off to the side away from his clothes. It was just wonderful.

He was more nervous than I because I knew better than he that we were alone in the house and nobody was going to come rushing in on us.

Now it was over, he was in a great rush.

He said, "We can't, we can't!"

I was suddenly afraid too that somebody across the street might have noticed me at the window and seen how I motioned him in, and how he turned and ran up the steps and in through the back door. Or suppose Caroline Steele had a reason to come earlier than she ever had.

We buttoned up and he followed me sneaking up the front stairs to the front door, where I looked down on the street and saw nobody and opened the door just wide enough for him to squeeze through.

He was down the steps at a shot, and looking this way and that, practically running, then forcing himself to slow down and walk calmly. I had probably made him late for work.

-O-

Mrs. Swift's chauffeur Jim MacDuff came to spend the winter in the Community House in the large, rather sparsely furnished, dark bedroom midway upstairs between my back room and Miss Steele's front office. I began getting my breakfast in the kitchen and went to the Sergeant House for lunch and dinner, but he got all his meals here. A tall, gaunt young fellow from Ripton, he and I, I thought, had little in common because I was so busy with my work at the college, and he was often on a trip.

Miss Steele seemed to resent having Jim brought into the house simply because Mrs. Swift needed to stow him away somewhere, and Jim didn't like Caroline, either. He thought she and Uncle and her niece were sponging on Mrs. Swift and that Caroline didn't know enough to do her job. I tried not to take sides and to get along with both of them.

-O-

I had a letter from David Payne, in his first year at Andover, writing about getting snowed under with homework:

"I'm so far behind I feel like committing suicide."

When I showed Jim the letter, he said, "That's a strange remark coming from him after his mother committed suicide."

-O-

It was into October -- beautiful weather, and my turn to read, and I'd been working on a paper on Jeremy Taylor's The Rule and Exercise of Holy Dying. I wasn't bothered when I read he was a Royalist. It seemed right he was imprisoned in 1645 by the Puritans after their victory, then sent into exile in Wales. He could be verbally angry at "libels against truth and old governors," but nothing in his nature suggested he was militant enough to merit being beheaded along with his King.

Not being enough of a Protestant to be dismayed at his High Church elegance, I delighted in sentences that flowed with original cadences and a charm of language combining exactly the right word from scholarly reading with a phrase borrowed from folklore. His piety didn't offend me because it was washed clean of evangelical zeal that attempts to scare people into Heaven to escape the wrath of an angry God who holds the soul of the unrighteous over the pit of a fiery Hell.

I tried in my language to imitate his mildness and his eloquence, and to demonstrate my delight by exhibiting my own feelings in response to his disarmingly candid display of his own.

-O-

On the morning of October 9, with my paper finally as ready as I could make it, I had the task of mopping the linoleum floor of the double meeting-chamber to the left of the front door. The ladies of the Fortnightly Club were gathering today. I counted on having just time to finish mopping before changing my clothes for lunch, after which I would go to campus for my Monday afternoon class.

I learned to mop floor at home helping Mom, but at Middlebury Inn first tackled a big job once in a while when the steward put me on special duty in a slack time between checkins and checkouts. I really liked manual labor of all sorts, relished the rhythm of the body in motion at a job of almost any kind. You had to plan your approach, then zero in on it, like this morning after getting my mop pail and filling it with soapy water, but not so soapy as to leave a scum, I began to swing the mop in the southeast corner just inside the door to the front hall, and made a long swishing swath of it, wringing out the mop after two or three swishes, in order to clean the floor, not just spread the dirt around. I figured I could do both rooms in about an hour. As I hit my stride, getting back, hips and arms into it, I moved sideways the whole width of the room, then turned around and, using different muscles came back on another swath, not hurrying, slow and easy but regular: dip, rinse, wring--two long sweeping swaths of it, then dip, rinse, wring, and another pair of swaths until I had traveled the width of the room.

After I got into the swing, I didn't have to think about it but began to go over in my mind my paper on Jeremy Taylor and how it would sound to Dick Brown, and Charlie DuBois, and Jane Spellman. Would they appreciate the work I put into it? I was keyed up and confident, but just a little nervous, as always before any class when I had to recite. I wouldn't have had it any different. I loved to prepare a lesson, and loved to show off if I had to recite, but part of it was being keyed up over the writing and the opportunity to find out that somebody appreciated the work and judgment that went into it. I hoped it paid off, hoped they would like it.

Time passed, and I was into the back corner of the room, taking the last swish, this time in a different rhythm, because instead of maneuvering the length of the room, I had only to back out of the northwest corner and end up at the archway into the north room that wasn't going to be used today.

I straightened up my aching back just right to come face to face with myself in a full length mirror on the back wall of the inner room. I couldn't account for it, but as I looked at myself, suddenly it was as if I had no control over the muscles of my face that were contorting and making myself over into a Frankenstein monster. I was shocked and surprised and enjoyed it enough to cooperate in the transformation. I was the beast ugly beyond compare, as if all my hidden, uncontrollable reflexes had taken command and I was reduced to a bundle of reprehensible instincts.

I pushed aside that nonsense, and looking at my watch disco-vered it was already quarter to twelve, and I had to rinse out the mop at the utility room sink, hang it in the broom closet and come back to flush away the dirty water and clean the pail and put everything away. Then I had to dash upstairs, take a shower, collect my briefcase and books, and hurry over to the Sergeant House for lunch, before going to class.

-O-

I got a good reception for my paper. As I was reading, my nervousness vanished as soon as I felt a sympathetic response to my portrait of Jeremy Taylor. I guessed Dick Brown was surprised because he had become familiar with my anticlericalism, and might not expect me to like Taylor as well as I did. When I finished, Jane Spellman commented on the way my own diction and lyrical prose reflected my admiration of Taylor's. She caught exactly the effect I wished to achieve.

Charlie and I and Jane went out in front of Old Chapel under leaves already taking color from frosty nights, and gabbed about the course that we all felt was going very well. Today marked a turning point since they had had turns reading their papers, and I'd just read mine. A friendship was building between the three of us.

I walked along with Jane to the library, and dawdled in the lower level reference room, browsing among books Dick Brown had placed on reserve. I glanced at Sir Thomas Browne's Pseudodoxia Epidemica, amused and puzzled

at the title, but laid it aside as too heavy for this glorious afternoon when I'd already performed my day labor. I settled down for an hour with The Compleat Angler, more congenial to my mood, and promising a connection with recollections from excursions up Four Mile Brook. Walton's mellow humor and gentle dismissal of fowling and hunting reflected my own prejudice, and I was delighted to find him as ignorant of fly-fishing as I. I spent an hour and a half in his company, then laid the book aside, and went out and lollygagged at my leisure down the walk of lower campus hardly able to contain my euphoria.

This had the feel of a beginning of the most wonderful year in my life. Although I didn't have a job teaching somewhere in a high school, in a way to have started graduate study even on such a small scale was even more rewarding, and, to a certain extent, I had begun teaching, if I counted my paper-reading "assistant-ship" (as Harry Owen called it).

As I approached the Community House admiring its handsome proportions, I couldn't be more pleased with myself.

Turning from the street up the sidewalk, I could see a touch of color tucked in the crack of the closed front door, and realized Miss Steele had finished her work and departed, and somebody had left a message not suitable for the mail slot.

Not expecting something addressed to me, I turned my key in the lock and, grasping the yellow slip, noticed my name. The message was brief: COME HOME AT ONCE STOP MELVIN.

Nothing could be further from my mood. I shut the door, hurried upstairs to my back room, where I stood holding the message as if by devouring it I could extract its mystery. There was no telegraph office in Northfield. The sending address was Greenfield.

I went to Miss Steele's office and telephoned her at home and asked permission to use the phone for a long distance call to my brother at his girl's home in Greenfield Mass.

"I'll pay for the call."

"What is wrong?"

"I don't know."

I read her the message, and told her I might have to leave on the eleven o'clock train.

"Be sure to call back. I want to know what you do."

I was angry to get a message telling me nothing. Mrs. Cooke answered the phone.

"Melvin is here."

When he came, I asked, "What is wrong?".

"Pop shot himself."

"What?"

"He lost his job."

"You mean they fired him?"

"Avison told him he had been stealing scrapwood from the shop and gasoline for the car."

"Pop wouldn't steal gas! He never would have! Everybody has been carrying home worthless scrapwood for ever and a day."

"Stealing's what Avison told him. He drove back home to Moores Corner and told Gram he needed to shoot a skunk out back, and went into the little buttery and loaded the shotgun and went out to the cowbarn and shot himself."

"When did it happen?"

"Late this morning. He shot himself above the heart."

"Where is Mom?"

"She's at home. Gram telephoned Ralph Lynch's and Mr. Lynch came down and told Mom.

"Where are Clayt and Larry?"

"I suppose Clayt's in the shop and it's time Larry got home from school. Aunt Gloria is home with Mom. Gramma Briggs may be coming. I called Mr. Cooke and he came over and got me and we went out to Moores Corner and I got the car. The funeral is Thursday in Moores Corner. Have you got any idea what time you can come?"

"There's a train leaves here around eleven and gets in to East Northfield after midnight. Can you meet me?"

"Somebody will."

I called Miss Steele and told her just that there was trouble at home and I would be gone a few days. She wanted to know what happened but I didn't feel like telling. I told her something happened to my father.

It was time to go to Sergeant House for supper. I didn't tell them anything except I had to go home for a few days. I was too numb to think. I went back to the Community House and threw a few things in my suitcase. I had four hours to kill.

I felt as if I would go crazy if I couldn't talk to somebody. I walked over to Ma Hagar's and knocked. She was at table having supper. I walked past without saying anything and out through the back door and sat on the stairs down to the backyard. After a few minutes she came out and laid her hand on my shoulder. I was there hunched over still not saying anything.

"Tell me what happened, Lyle."

I didn't say anything. I wanted her to ask again.

"You'll feel better if you tell me."

It poured out with a gush: "My father killed himself. He lost his job, because they said he stole some gas and wood from the shop. My father would never believe they would believe he would do it."

Ma Hagar said, "You sit right here. I'll be back in a minute."

When she came back she had called President Moody. "He was at dinner. He will drive you to Northfield. You go back to the Community House and get your things ready, and he will be along to pick you up in three quarters of an hour to an hour."

The weather was changing. I walked back along Washington Street in a drizzle, and by the time I went in the front door, it had begun to pour. I went upstairs and packed my suitcase and sat by the window in the drawing room looking out. I got up and put on the hall light, then went back to watching the cars slip past in the rain. It had grown dark enough for them to have headlights on. I couldn't think of anything except I had to get home to Mom. She would know what to do. I went back up to Miss Steele's office and called Ralph Lynch's and he said he would go down to our house and tell them I was coming by car. I went back down and watched for President Moody.

After a while, a small roadster made a U-turn in the street and came to a stop at the foot of our sidewalk facing back downstreet. I didn't pay any attention because it wasn't President Moody. A young man got out and walked around front of the car and looked up at the house and came to the door.

When I get there, it was Lance Hammond. who was having dinner at the Moodys, and offered to drive me to Northfield. I got my suitcase and went down and helped him snap side curtains over the windows. We didn't say much. I put my suitcase onto the shelf behind the seat and climbed in. Lance reached over and showed me how to fasten myself in better to keep the rain out. We circled the common, then up across from the Inn swung onto the road to Rutland. I asked if he knew the road, and it turned out his father was Director of Music at Smith College and Mount Holyoke, and this was the route he followed going home.

It was a terrible trip, rain pouring down in such torrents windshield wipers had a hard time clearing a space wide enough for vision ahead. Lance kept slowing down, then speeding up a little as his visibility cleared. I sat hunched and tense, both of us peering into the hole in the rainy night made by our headlights boring a tunnel through darkness ahead.

We hardly said anything except once I came out with, "Mom will be there, and everything will be all right."

I knew everything wouldn't be, but what I was trying to say was Mom would have some way to make it bearable.

Nine miles south of Rutland we turned east on the road to Ludlow and Bellows Falls, Lance seeming to know the road well, and I hardly paying attention except to keep my mind busy studying the streaks of rain lashing the car, as if by pure concentration I could push back the storm enough to let us through.

In Ludlow and Bellows Falls and Brattleboro the streets were deserted. On the south edge of Brattleboro, I directed Lance over the Connecticut River onto the road to Hinsdale. He had been used to cutting straight down to Bernardston and Greenfield, but we could save ten to fifteen miles by going through New Hampshire.

If the rain let up a bit for a minute, it soon came down in sheets worse than ever. By the time we passed through Northfield Main Street, I had been wasting my strength so much I was as tired as if I'd been driving. To make it worse, I could only sit there and see objects looming ahead without any power to avoid them. By a miracle of insight Lance always managed to turn the wheel in time.

My tension increased as the road became more familiar, and when we started on the schoolbus route from Northfield High School to the Farms, I could

hardly bear doing nothing. Lance depended on my directions now, but except for a couple of warnings against turnoffs there was nothing to be said. We came past the Hammonds and the Brzinskis and the Tenneys, past the Library and Number Four schoolhouse over the little bridge past Gilberts' and Gramma Billings's and Gramma Lynch's. I was surprised to see the houses all dark as if it was an ordinary night. We came to Lucy Ross's and downhill to Woods's store and past Ralph Lynch's and were practically home. In front of Frank Howe's I told him to slow down, but I hardly had to. Ours was the only house in Northfield Farms with a light on in the kitchen. I asked Lance if he would like to come in for a cup of coffee, but he said he was going back to Northfield to spend the night at W. R. Moody's. If I had known when we came through East Northfield, I could have showed him their driveway.

The front door opened as we came to a stop, and Melvin was beside me before I could unfasten the side curtain. I reached back for my suitcase. Uncle Forrest walked past the headlights around to the driver's side talking to Lance. I got out dragging my suitcase, and Melvin reached to take it, and put his arm around my shoulder and led me aside.

"Mom is gone, too."

I said, "It's better that way," but I didn't know what I was saying. Inside I was bawling.

Mel was telling how she got away from Aunt Gloria by going into the entry and coming back with an apple apiece and then going back, Aunt Gloria thought, to the backhouse. But she went down the henyard stairs to the lower level then out to the sideroad and under the underpass to the cross road. There she kept going straight to the ferry and must have walked out in shallows till the current carried her away. It took some time before they started searching the river bank. They found her a couple hours later caught in the roots of the oak tree on the promontory from where we fished summer evenings looking over to Gill on the opposite shore.

When we went inside, there was nobody up. Aunt Gloria had gone back to the Corners, and Gramma Briggs and Uncle Forrest came down from Brattleboro to take her place. Gramma had gone to bed and Clayt and Larry. Uncle Forrest came in carrying one of Lance's side curtains that dropped off when I pulled out my suitcase.

Melvin had told me enough, and they didn't feel like talking any more than I did. Uncle Forrest disappeared and Mel and I went up to our old bedroom. I hardly noticed the electric lights installed since I was last home. We undressed and crawled into bed. I lay still on my side of the bed, too staggered to think, unable to sleep. I took care not to disturb Melvin. I lay with my eyes open hearing the rain pour down on the roof. I lay there for more than an hour my mind empty of everything except pressure inside that kept my eyes peeled on the dark.

I crept out of bed, pulled on my clothes, tiptoed downstairs and out into the night, where I started running. I ran under the black sky feeling the emptiness up above except the rain driving down. I ran under drenched and dripping trees past darkened houses all the way up the road past Hammonds', and pounded down the steep hill beyond and farther till I'd exhausted the outburst of wind in my lungs. Then I turn back, and on the hill climbing back up to Hammonds' caught my second wind, and felt my muscles pull together, and ran past the houses under the rain-drenched trees back downhill past Hammonds' and Tenneys' and Gilberts' and Woods's, and Lynches' and Frank Howe's and, finally, home and in through the kitchen door into the dark kitchen. Without turning on a light, I moved through the familiar rooms -- through kitchen, diningroom (plates on sideboard rattling), through sittingroom and up stairs, dimly aware of Gramma Briggs in Pop and Mom's room, on their bed, I supposed, and Uncle Forrest in a livingroom chair,. and Larry in the little bedroom off the diningroom, and at the top of the stairs Clayt in his room on the west side toward the railroad tracks.

Were they sleeping, or were they staring into the night? Back in our room I undressed, using my undershirt to towel my hair, and eased into bed without waking Melvin. And lay there, eyes propped open, as long as it took to drift into sleep.